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Israel outstrips U.S. arms aid by \$500m

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel went beyond its \$1.8 billion in U.S. military aid by 27 per cent through arms purchases in the United States, leading to a freeze on future deals with American firms, newspapers reported Tuesday. Chief of Staff Ehud Barak has appointed a special committee to investigate how Israel topped its 1991 American military aid by \$300 million, the daily Al Hamishmar said. The committee, which has close contacts with the army and defence ministry, quoted senior military officials for the report. The independent daily Hadashot said the defence ministry in the past weeks has ordered its representatives in the United States to freeze all commitments with American suppliers until 1992. The newspaper added that exceptions would be made for specific orders of up to \$200,000. Security sources confirmed there were problems with over spending. One official said there was "an over-run" in the present budget which would be made up for next year. A source close to the army said the defence ministry had "simply bought more than it had money for." The over spending was reportedly due to purchases in the United States in the past year including emergency acquisitions during the Gulf war.

Soviet Union allows Western TV to film Lenin

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet Union allowed Western photographers and television crews inside the Lenin mausoleum on Tuesday, breaking with a quasi-religious taboo which for decades surrounded the embalmed body of the Soviet state's founder. Photographers and cameramen from organisations including Reuters and Visnews were allowed in for 15 minutes to take pictures inside the vault where Lenin's body is displayed. They also saw the complex control room where the air temperature and humidity in the vault are constantly monitored. Photographers and cameramen from Pravda newspaper were allowed inside at the end of October. The German magazine Der Spiegel bought the Western rights to their film. Lenin, who died in 1924 after a series of massive strokes, was first buried in a simple wooden mausoleum on Red Square outside the Kremlin. The present red marble mausoleum was built later in the 1920s by Stalin, whose body rested next to Lenin's from 1953 to 1961. Suggestions that Lenin's body should be removed have multiplied since the failed August coup, while orthodox communists have demonstrated to demand that he should be left alone.

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Crown Prince leaves for London

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday left for London on a short visit to the United Kingdom. He was seen off at the airport by Prime Minister Taher Masri, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid and senior Royal Court officials.

Lebanon seizes polluted gasoline

BEIRUT (AP) — The Lebanese government on Tuesday seized the Cyprus-flag oil tanker Athenes Olympic with a shipment of highly polluted imported gasoline, an official statement said. The statement issued by the Ministry of Economy and Commerce said passports of the tanker's 27 crew members were confiscated pending completion of investigation. The vessel, carrying 20,000 tonnes of gasoline from Yugoslavia, docked at Beirut port Oct. 31. It unloaded 5,000 tonnes over the next few days and these were distributed to filling stations. The unloading stopped on Nov. 8 due to bad weather, and in the meantime, motorists purchasing the gasoline began complaining of strange odors that were leaving them dizzy, nauseated and suffering from severe headaches. The Ministry of Industry and Petroleum intervened, sending experts to the filling stations and to the ship to examine the gasoline. They found the shipment contained too much of a sulfurous gas that is considered a major air pollutant.

'Iraq had Scuds loaded with chemicals'

VIENNA (AP) — Iraq had missiles loaded with chemical weapons during the Gulf war that could have been used, an Austrian defence expert said Tuesday. However, primitive technology used to modify the Soviet-made Scud missiles made it doubtful they could have delivered the deadly nerve gas and other chemicals, Matthias Haydn said. Lieutenant Haydn was one of three Austrian decontamination experts who visited Iraq on two U.N. inspection tours during the late summer and again for three weeks ending Nov. 5.

Iranian envoy holds talks in UAE

DUBAI (R) — An Iranian envoy met the foreign and defence ministers of the United Arab Emirates Tuesday for regional political and security talks, the official Emirates News Agency (WAM) reported. Ali Mohammad Becharati discussed with Foreign Minister Rashid Abdullah Al Nuaimi and Defence Minister Sheikh Mohammad Ben Rashid Al Maktoum how to "employ the existing cooperation in boosting regional peace and security." WAM quoted Mr. Becharati as saying relations between the two Gulf countries would expand further in the future. The Iranian envoy is on a tour of the Gulf Arab states, which warmed towards Tehran after it took a neutral stand when U.S.-led allied troops evicted Iraq from Kuwait in the Gulf war that ended in February.

Athens suggests nuclear material supply to Mideast

ATHENS (AP) — The government Tuesday said it spent two months following a man possibly involved in the shipment to the Middle East of material that can be used to build hydrogen bombs. "The information was received from reliable sources on Sept. 9 and the physical surveillance began," government spokesman Vyras Polydoros said. The case against the suspect, an unidentified Hungarian said to be trafficking in "red mercury," came to light last Friday after police detained three National Intelligence Agency agents outside the offices of a politician who was recently dismissed from the cabinet. The arrests became a political issue after opposition parties charged that the conservative New Democracy government was using the intelligence agency to spy on its party members, an accusation the administration denied.

Syria toughens stand after Knesset votes no negotiations on Golan

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria accused Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of racism Tuesday and accused Israel of trying to block the U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace process. The ruling Baath Party daily Al Baath denounced the Israeli parliament (Knesset) for passing a draft resolution placing the occupied Golan Heights off-limits for negotiations. "Although the world no longer needs more proof on Israel's rejection of peace, it provides every day new evidence on its position aimed at destroying the whole peace process," it said. "This is exactly what it did yesterday when the Knesset voted in favour of a new resolution confirming adherence to the occupied Golan."

'Arafat' and 'Habash' debate peace process in Bethlehem

BETHLEHEM, occupied West Bank (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leaders Yasser Arafat and George Habash featured prominently in a debate Tuesday on the Palestinians' future, though neither of the men was there. Mr. Arafat's picture hung behind PLO supporter Faisal Hussein as he argued for the peace process begun at last month's Madrid conference. His opponent, Riad Al Malki, spoke before a poster of Dr. Habash, a leader of opposition to the peace talks. The debate at Bethlehem University touched on all the dreams, hopes, hesitations and fears that Palestinians are discussing among themselves as they start on an uncertain road to peace with Israel. Mr. Hussein argued that the limited autonomy Israel is offering the residents of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip would lead eventually to the dream of a Palestinian nation. "Autonomy is Israeli language," he said. "We are fighting for an independent state."

Kurdish forces step back from northern Iraqi town

ERBIL (R) — Kurdish guerrillas have pulled back their lines south of Erbil, creating a five-kilometre buffer strip between themselves and the Iraqi army. Kurdish envoys who returned from Baghdad said Monday they believed that Iraqi forces did not intend to move into Erbil, which has a population of 800,000. They said Baghdad had offered to lift an economic blockade of Kurdistan if armed guerrillas withdrew from the cities of northern Iraq. Artillery fire was heard in the area Monday and some clashes reported but there was no sign of a major Iraqi push on Erbil, which is 80 kilometres east of the government-controlled city of Mosul. Guerrilla positions south of the city are on flat farmland. If the Iraqi army launched a tank offensive the Kurds would have little chance of stopping them before the outskirts. The army crushed a Kurdish rebellion after the Gulf war. Millions of Kurds fled to Turkey and Iran. But Western pressure has prevented Baghdad from exerting

an attempt to block the next stage of bilateral talks. "The enemy's failure to block the first stage of talks led it to escalate attempts to block the second stage which would discuss the implementation of international resolutions," it said. "These (U.N.) resolutions reject the possession of land by military aggression and point clearly to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people." President Hafez Al Assad accused Israel Monday of trying to obstruct the peace talks by avoiding U.N. resolutions and refusing to talk about territorial concessions. The Arabs, on the other hand, were working "sincerely and in good faith" to make a success of the peace process launched in Madrid last month, Mr. Assad was quoted as telling a group of Syrian expatriates from the United States. A Syrian official said Mr. Assad told the meeting: "His (Mr. Shamir's) speech and remarks did not include any reference to U.N. resolutions upon which the conference was held. Land for peace was not mentioned either. "Instead he (Mr. Shamir) insisted the occupied Arab territories were Israeli territory." The government also signalled its reluctance to accept Washing-

ton as a compromise site for further talks expected to begin within the next 10 days. An official noted that Syria is still regarded by the United States as a sponsor of "terrorism," and also that Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) members are denied American visas. In its strongest statement since the first session adjourned last week in Madrid, Damascus Radio said Israeli provocations appeared aimed against the peace process. The commentary responded to a statement by Mr. Shamir on Monday that Israel was unwilling to yield occupied territory "because Israel's measurements are too small." Also Monday, the Israeli parliament voted to oppose negotiations on the future of the Golan Heights, seized from Syria in 1967. The parliament also called for more Jewish settlement there. Damascus Radio described the actions as "part of the continuous Israeli provocations aimed at the peace efforts of the U.S. administration." It suggested that Mr. Shamir, who made his remark to visiting South African President F.W. de Klerk, should learn from South Africa's decision to dismantle

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Peace train should be put back on track — Hawatmeh

By Sana Atiyeh
 Special to the Jordan Times
 AMMAN — The "peace train" that just left the Madrid station should be put on the right track if it is to reach the "proper destination" where Palestinian national rights are met according to international legitimacy, a senior leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) said Tuesday.

The leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), Nayef Hawatmeh, said that it was not too late to reformulate the Palestinian delegation to the U.S.-Soviet sponsored peace process to include Palestinian representation from the diaspora and from Arab Jerusalem. Mr. Hawatmeh told the Jordan Times in an interview that there should be Palestinian unity, Palestinian-Jordanian and Arab coordination to link the issue of halting Jewish settlements in the occupied territories to suspending the negotiations until the Israelis stopped building settlements. The official also called on efforts to insist that the agenda of the next Palestinian-Israeli bilateral negotiations be amended to include Security Council resolutions that call on Israel to withdraw from the territories it occupied in 1967, rather than to negotiate the proposed self-government to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Mr. Hawatmeh, who met with

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KING VISITS GHQ: His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday paid a visit to the Armed Forces Headquarters, where he was received by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Field Marshal Fathi Abu Taleb and his assistants and the Armed Forces Inspector general. The King met for a while with Field Marshal Abu Taleb and discussed with him

issues of interest to the Armed Forces. Part of the meeting was attended by the assistants to Field Marshal Abu Taleb, the commander of the Royal Jordanian Air Force and the Armed Forces Inspector general. The King was accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Muhammad, the King's military secretary (Petra photo)

U.S. plans second major Mideast talks within weeks

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States is planning a second major Middle East peace gathering within the next three weeks to be opened by Secretary of State James Baker and attended by Arab, Israeli and other foreign ministers, officials said Tuesday. The conference, tentatively planned to take place somewhere in Europe in early December, would deal with Middle East regional issues such as arms control, sharing water resources, trades, the environment and refugees. That would open up a second and separate line of talks from the main peace talks begun in Madrid Oct. 30-Nov. 3. Although a regional conference has always been in prospect as a complement to the central talks, the plan emerging shapes up as much grander in scale than originally foreseen. "The idea is that these talks can play a very important role in facilitating the main negotiations," said one administration official who asked not to be identified. "Baker would if possible make it a big event, a significant event that once again gives a sense of momentum and the breaking of taboos while creating an international environment of support for the peace process," he said. The talks would probably extend over years since it will be difficult to deal seriously with many of the problems until real peace begins to be established in the Middle East. But Mr. Baker wants to give them real momentum at the outset to demonstrate that the United States is already thinking ahead into a post-crisis era, the official said. Syria says it will not attend such talks and has urged other Arabs to stay away until Israel

begins withdrawing from occupied territories. The regional gathering will be much bigger in terms of participants than the Madrid peace conference. European countries and others like Japan and Canada are being encouraged to attend to discuss ways they could help the Middle East make the transformation from war to peace. The six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council — Arab states outside the front-line Arab-Israeli confrontation — have promised to attend as have the Maghreb states of Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria and other regional powers like Turkey. By the time the regional conference convenes, officials and diplomats expect that three sets of bilateral talks between Israel and Syria, Israel and Lebanon and Israel and a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation also will have resumed. These represent the forum where actual peace agreement to end the Arab-Israeli conflict are to be discussed. The parties held opening sessions in Madrid immediately after the peace conference but are still divided over where to resume. Israel is also upset that it has not yet been shown the text of the letters of assurances that the United States gave Arab states and the Palestinians before the Madrid conference. Mr. Baker had pledged that all participants would be made aware of U.S. commitments to other parties. But Israeli sources said that when they asked for the U.S. letter to Syria, U.S. officials said the time was not ripe for disclosure. Mr. Baker, who is spending the week in Asia, is expected to resume intense Middle East activity upon return to Washington.



Abu Taleb promoted as Field Marshal

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday promoted Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fathi Abu Taleb to the rank of Field Marshal, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. Field Marshal Abu Taleb, 57, would join just two other former military officials to achieve the highest rank in the Jordanian Armed Forces. Another Royal Decree promoted Director General of the General Intelligence Department Major General Mustafa Qaisi to lieutenant general. Field Marshal Abu Taleb, a native of Salt, now shares the rank of field marshal with Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Habbes Majali, Jordan's first Armed Forces commander-in-chief. He is a graduate of the Royal Military College in Jordan, but he attended several military courses at British and American colleges.

Palestinians seek broad control of territory

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Palestinian negotiators say they want broad control over the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip with only a restricted Israeli military presence during a five-year period ending in full independence. "Israel will retain its military occupation in the form of military presence in specific military and strategic areas," said Ghassan Al Khatib, a strategist on the Palestinian peace negotiating team. "But we must have control of the land, including crossing points (from Jordan and Egypt)," he said. Palestinian negotiators, back from Middle East peace talks in Madrid, say Palestinian control of land and legislation during the five-year interim period is at the heart of their negotiating strategy. Their position contrasts with the limited self-rule offer from headline Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir who says he does not intend to withdraw from any land. Although a venue has not been agreed for direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, talks are expected to start during the next month. "We are working on... steps that would ensure the smooth running of this process, creating the conditions that would lead to transitional arrangements that would support the creation of independent Palestinian institutions and a Palestinian infrastructure," said Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian negotiating team. During eight months of diplomacy, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker coaxed Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate a two-stage settlement, starting with five years of local self-rule for the Palestinians in the occupied territories. The Baker proposals, based on U.N. resolutions calling for exchanging occupied Arab land for peace for Israel, call for negotiating the final status of the occupied territories at the start of the third year. Western diplomats say Washington's proposals provide the best chance for progress towards peace because they delay talks on Israel's withdrawal for three years, shielding 76-year-old Shamir from personally making territorial concessions. Palestinians, who for 24 years watched helplessly as Israel took more than half of West Bank and Gaza Strip land and installed some 112,000 settlers, want to freeze Jewish settlement. Negotiators say only by controlling the land can they ensure self-rule develop into full independence.

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JANDA to stay out of cabinet, but will back Masri in Parliament

By Lammis K. Andoni

AMMAN — The Jordan Arab National Democratic Alliance (JANDA), the broadest coalition of leftists, liberals, pan-Arab nationalists and professional unions in Jordan will not take part in the new coalition cabinet led by Prime Minister Taher Masri, but was expected to leave the door open for its members to join the cabinet, according to JANDA sources. JANDA, they said, is expected to keep the door open for its members to join or boycott a new reshuffled cabinet after its failure so far to reach a consensus. While the main groups constituting JANDA will most likely stay away from the cabinet, Mr. Masri might be able to recruit independent members. Mr. Masri, according to well-informed sources, however, professes the parti-

cipation of JANDA as a representative of organised groups rather than individual members who do not represent grass-root organisations. The alliance is also expected to leave the question of parliamentary confidence up to the individual decisions of its nine deputies if the group failed on reaching a consensus prior to the convening of Parliament next month. JANDA's position reflects dissatisfaction with the cabinet's performance combined with fear that any government failure will strengthen forces and trends that oppose wider political freedoms in the country. Peace talks with Israel, a widely perceived lack of progress towards democratisation and recent economic austerity measures are the main factors that threaten to put an end for the alliance that brought together the coalition cabinet of Mr. Masri last June.

For the first time since 1957 a prime minister, in this case Mr. Masri, was able to win the support and involvement of the representatives of the left, pan-Arab nationalists, liberals and the strong professional unions. JANDA's support was crucial to counter-balance the Muslim Brotherhood that was excluded from the government and vehemently opposed any peace talks with Israel. In Parliament, where Mr. Masri is expected to face his real test when the legislative council resumes sessions next month, JANDA, represented by nine seats, is no competition to the strong Muslim Brotherhood that controls 22 of the 80 seat chamber of deputies. Mr. Masri, however, has been concerned, according to sources close to him, to maintain the support of groups with grass-root following,

especially if he was discounting the Brotherhood's backing. But this week the majority in JANDA decided that there was no use in continuing on taking part in the cabinet. Yet its leaders who met Monday night avoided taking a final binding decision. Although the majority of the trends in JANDA is against taking part in any cabinet reshuffle, differences over the peace process within the coalition itself and concern that the failure of Mr. Masri to form a government could lead to a setback to the democratisation process have prevented a consensus at the Monday meeting. JANDA, according to some of its officials, has opted for not being part in the government but will try to support Mr. Masri's cabinet from collapsing. Earlier Monday, JANDA's

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Afghan rebels say Russia backs them

MOSCOW (AP) — Afghan rebel official said Monday that Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi told him he supported the rebels' armed struggle against the Kremlin-backed government in Kabul.

"Mr. Rutskoi said the establishment of an Islamic government in Afghanistan is guaranteed," Masood Khalil said after he and 10 other visiting Afghan rebel leaders met with Mr. Rutskoi.

A spokesman for Mr. Rutskoi's office said Monday that the vice president would not comment on the ongoing meetings with the Afghan representatives until later.

Soviet leaders long have backed President Najibullah's government, but Mr. Rutskoi's apparent expression of support for the rebels could mean the powerful republic has adopted a new policy for Afghanistan.

Mr. Rutskoi is a veteran of the Afghan war. As a pilot, he was shot down in Afghanistan, captured by rebels and later released as part of a prisoner exchange. Moscow committed more than a 100,000 troops to Afghanistan to help the Kabul government fight the rebels. The last Soviet troops withdrew on 1989.

Spurred by a new U.S.-Soviet peace plan, the rebels arrived Sunday for talks aimed at ending the rebels' 12-year-old civil war with Kremlin-backed forces.

They are the first direct talks in Moscow between Soviet officials and the rebel "transitional government" fighting Mr. Najibullah.

The United States and the Soviet Union have agreed to halt

all arms supplies to the country and help organize elections under the new peace plan.

Burhanuddin Rabbani, head of the rebel delegation, said Mr. Rutskoi repeated assurances that Russia will stop sending weapons to prop up Mr. Najibullah's forces.

"We want to turn over a new page in our relations with Russia," Mr. Rabbani said during a meeting with mothers of soldiers missing in action or taken prisoner during the 10-year Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

"We will work towards the freeing of the Soviet prisoners," he added.

Soviet and Russian officials say more than 300 Soviet prisoners of war are still being held by the Mujahideen rebels.

The rebels have fought successive Kremlin-backed governments installed after the 1979 Soviet invasion. They have been backed mainly by Pakistan, Iran and the United States.

Mr. Rabbani said he brought a list of 11,000 missing Afghan soldiers "whom we assume are POWs (prisoners of war)," he said.

"But we don't in any way make this a precondition for liberating the Soviet prisoners," Mr. Rabbani added. "We will free them without any sort of exchange."

The rebel delegation was to meet Tuesday with Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin and Wednesday with Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

U.S. officials say more than one million Afghans have been killed in the war and about five million total refugees, including about three million in Pakistan and 1.9 million in Iran.

Pakistan welcomes Iranian offer

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan welcomed an Iranian offer to mediate between India and Pakistan over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said Tuesday.

Islamabad welcomed any effort to solve the Kashmir problem in accordance with United Nations resolutions calling for a plebiscite to let Kashmiris to decide if they want to be part of Pakistan or India, he told the official AFP news agency.

Indian President Akbar Hashmi Rafsanjani reportedly offered to mediate during talks with Indian Foreign Minister Madhav Singh Solanki in Tehran Monday.

India, which blames Pakistan for a secessionist uprising by Kashmiris in its Jammu and Kashmir state has previously refused to consider mediation.

Pakistan denies fomenting the rebellion in which nearly 4,000 people have died since January last year. Kashmir remains the major obstacle to normal relations between the neighboring countries.

They have fought two of their three wars since independence from Britain in 1947 over Kashmir. Two-thirds of Kashmir is controlled by India, one-third by Pakistan.

Pakistan denies reports Tuesday that his government had offered to help Iran rebuild a nuclear research reactor.

"No such thing is under consideration," AFP quoted him as saying at the opening of an industrial exhibition.

Press reports Tuesday quoted Pakistani scientists as saying they were capable of helping Iran extend the life of a research reactor, after rebuilding a Pakistani one set up by the United States during the 1960s.

Washington stopped all military and economic aid to Pakistan a year ago because of worries that it was trying to develop nuclear weapons.

A senior U.S. State Department official in charge of security affairs, Reginald Bartholomew, is due in Pakistan next week for talks on the nuclear row.

Any suggestion that Pakistan might be cooperating with Iran in nuclear matters would be likely to increase U.S. concern.

Iran, India sign accords

India and Iran have signed agreements to promote diplomatic ties, regional cooperation and trade, Tehran Radio reported.

It said India's Solanki signed the five accords on Monday with his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Velayati at the end of a four-day visit to Tehran.

"Trade between the two countries will be considerably increased," said the radio.

One of the agreements provided for cultural, scientific and technical exchanges between India and Iran from 1991 to 1994.

The radio quoted Mr. Velayati as saying Indian delegations would be visiting Iran within a month to follow up questions discussed.

Iran offers to free PoWs, wants Iraq to reciprocate

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Iran told the U.N. secretary-general Monday it was willing to release all remaining Iraqi prisoners captured during the Iran-Iraq war and called for reciprocal action by Iraq, the spokesman for Iran's U.N. mission said.

The offer was made at a meeting between Iranian U.N. Representative Kamal Kharrazi and Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

The spokesman said he did not know how many Iraqi prisoners of war (PoWs) were still held by Iran. Tehran had sent Iraq a list of some 5,000 Iraqis that it says are still being held in Iraq, he added.

"The two countries agreed to a ceasefire in August 1988, ending eight years of war that caused huge casualties."

Asked if Iran was making the release of its own people held by Iraq a condition for the freeing of Iraqi prisoners, the Iranian spokesman said Mr. Kharrazi called for "a similar initiative by the Iraqi side" in accordance with Security Council Resolution 598 of 1987, which led to the ceasefire

the following year.

The third paragraph of the resolution "urges that prisoners of war be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities in accordance with the Third Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949."

The Iranian spokesman said Mr. Perez de Cuellar assured Mr. Kharrazi he had decided to implement all remaining provisions of Resolution 598 before his term of office expires at the end of this year.

These include a request to the secretary-general to explore the question of asking an impartial body to investigate responsibility for the Iran-Iraq war, which each side blames the other for starting.

Mr. Kharrazi was said to have thanked Mr. Perez de Cuellar for having recently sent former U.N. Under-Secretary-General Abdul Rahim Abby Farah, who led a mission to Iran earlier this year, to conduct a second survey of war damage in Iran, in accordance with another provision of the council resolution dealing with reparations and reconstruction.

Foreign contractors ask GCC to help on university debt

BAHRAIN (R) — Foreign contractors suing the Arabian Gulf University and its seven owner states have asked the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to help solve its debt problem, company sources said Tuesday.

Each of the four main contractors — who say they are owed a total of \$66 million — signed a letter which was delivered to GCC Secretary General Abdullah Bishara Tuesday, the sources said.

Iraq and GCC members Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates own the cash-strapped university. The contractors began legal action in Bahrain last month in an unprecedented step for the oil-rich area.

"We are appealing for Bishara's support and assistance to help us solve the problem before matters get out of hand," Jeff Higgins, spokesman for the UAE-Australian firm Al Habtour Leighton, told Reuters.

"We hope that the GCC conference in December will resolve the issue once and for all — we never wanted to go to court, we were forced to do it," he said.

Mr. Higgins was referring to a GCC summit due to take place in Kuwait at the end of December.

The other three contractors are Korea's Desim Industrial Co, Taiwan's Ret Ser Engineering Agency, and Saudi Arabia's Raby Landscaping Ltd.

They are all filing individual suits because they had separate contracts for the showpiece university, which they finished building in 1988. Regular payments stopped in 1986.

The GCC states agreed two years ago to pay Iraq's portion of the debt but industry sources say not all paid their share.

Daelim's case — the first to be filed — was being heard in Bahrain's high court on Tuesday, S.I. Kim, regional business manager for Daelim, said.

He told Reuters the firm was appealing against a court decision to release part of the university's accounts. They were initially frozen, along with its moveable assets.

Daelim had also asked the court to seize the university's buildings but this had not yet been granted, he said.

Bahrain University took over the campus two months ago but has not accepted liability for its debts.

The Arabian Gulf University has stopped taking new students and moved those it has to its separate medical campus.

Mr. Higgins said his firm, whose case was filed last week, was making similar demands. The Shaikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa law firm in Bahrain is handling all four cases.

Spy's son seeking citizenship

CAIRO (AP) — Rifaat Al Gamal, Egypt's most famous spy, is proving as intriguing in death as he was in life, which he purportedly spent in Israel masquerading as Jewish businessman Jack Bitton.

Bitton, who as an adult held both Israeli and German citizenship, died in Germany nine years ago. Egyptian intelligence officials have refused to confirm or deny that Bitton and Al Gamal were one and the same.

Now Bitton's 28-year-old son, Daniel, is claiming Egyptian citizenship, to which an Egyptian father would entitle him. Faced with government foot-dragging, he has used President Hosni Mubarak and Abdul Halim Musa, the interior minister, to force the issue.

Researchers differ on Dead Sea scrolls' meaning

CINCINNATI (AP) — A researcher who has spent 15 years translating the Dead Sea scrolls says a California professor was wrong to conclude that the text referred to execution of a Messiah-like leader.

Ben Zion Wacholder, a Hebrew Union College professor of Jewish law, said he interprets the five-line passage to refer to a prophecy in which a "leader of a congregation" will kill an enemy of Israel in a war at the end of recorded history when the Messiah would come.

Mr. Wacholder said it is a poetic reference to an event that has not yet occurred.

Robert Eisenman, chairman of religious studies at California State University-Long Beach, said last week the reference is significant because it shows the scrolls' authors "had the same Messianic ideas that are familiar in early Christian teachings."

Mr. Eisenman said he found the text among 3,000 photographs of the scrolls opened to scholarly study in September by the Huntington Library in San Marino, California.

Mr. Eisenman said he did not know whether the text referred to Jesus Christ. He said the text describes "a leader of the community" being put to death and mentions piercings or wounds. It also uses terms such as "the staff," "the branch of David" and "the root of Jesse," Mr. Eisenman said.

Mr. Wacholder said he had access to the same text and believes the context clearly demonstrates Mr. Eisenman's conclusion is incorrect.

"He has mistranslated the Hebrew text," Mr. Wacholder said by telephone from his Cincinnati home.

"The actual translation is that, 'the leader of the congregation shall kill him,'" Mr. Wacholder said. "The person to whom this refers is not given."

Mr. Wacholder said the "him" who would be killed probably refers to the leader of the Kittans, who would invade Israel in this prophecy. The prophecy, a founding premise of Hebrew faith, refers to a future occasion when the Messiah would come, he said.

Mr. Eisenman disagreed with Mr. Wacholder's interpretation, and said he "missed the point."

"Even if he turns it around, he is obfuscating the fact that it's still relating to the killing of somebody — I don't accept his reading, mind you — within the framework of Messianic prophecy. So what's the argument?" Mr. Eisenman said in a telephone interview Monday.

Mr. Wacholder has worked the past three years with Martin Abegg, a Hebrew Union Biblical graduate student who used a computer to help Mr. Wacholder reconstruct thousands of unpublished scrolls and fragments.

Since the scrolls were found in caves near the Dead Sea after World War II, a group of international scholars has controlled access to them.

Mr. Wacholder and Mr. Abegg challenged that control by announcing their results in early September. They intend to publish their findings by the end of the year, probably through the Biblical Archaeology Society in Washington, Mr. Wacholder said.

Palestinian Jews are believed to have written the scrolls during the two centuries before and during Jesus' life. The scrolls include the oldest known Biblical manuscripts as well as documents illuminating life among Jews near the Dead Sea.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Qadhafi's words trigger angry Algeria

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria reacted angrily Monday to Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's criticism of the outcome of its eight-year struggle for independence against France. In an interview with Algerian television on Saturday, Colonel Qadhafi said the "Algerian revolution brought few gains in view of the fact 1.5 million martyrs sacrificed their lives." He said Algeria had withered and was now "like any other country which had won its independence without such sacrifices." A rare statement read on Algerian state-run television said Col. Qadhafi's words "were perceived by war veterans as an insult to the enormous sacrifices paid by the Algerian people." Algeria and Libya belong to the five-nation Arab Maghreb Union. Algeria proclaimed its independence in 1962. Col. Qadhafi said in the interview that little of the aid Tripoli had given Algeria over the past 20 years had been paid back and that Libya would now "use its international credibility to financially back Algeria." In an apparent response to this, the Algerian statement said "cooperation between brothers should prevail" and that Algeria would refrain from "discussing publicly all the forms of aid that were granted to brothers."

Son of Iraqi-American shot twice

TULSA (AP) — A man who had planned to return to his native Iraq Sunday was shot and wounded following an apparent family dispute, Tulsa police said. Ahmad Al Musawi, who came to stay with his Iraqi father and American stepmother three days before the Gulf war began in January, was listed in serious condition Monday at Hillcrest Medical Center, a spokeswoman said. He had been shot in the chest and the head. His stepmother was taken into custody for questioning and released, Gerald Konkier said. The district attorney's office was expected to review the shooting Tuesday. Ahmad Al Musawi, a naturalized U.S. citizen who came from Iraq 15 years ago to study aeronautics, found his son just inside the front door of their home Sunday afternoon, police said. Mr. Konkier said the younger Musawi was scheduled to return to Iraq Sunday. The Musawi home was heavily damaged by fire Feb. 20 in what authorities estimate to be arson. The family was on vacation when the fire gutted the house and caused an estimated \$60,000 in damage. The words "You are dead" were written with spray paint on the back of the house in east Tulsa.

New editor for Syrian news agency

DAMASCUS (R) — Syrian Information Minister Mohammad Salman has named Faysal Al Sayegh as director-general and editor of the Syrian News Agency SANA. Mr. Sayegh has been deputy director-general for SANA for a year and served as news editor in Syrian newspapers and correspondent in several Arab and European capitals including Cairo and Moscow. He replaces Saber Falhout who was elected president of the Syrian Journalists Union.

Algeria's biggest paper to reappear temporarily

ALGIERS (R) — Strikers who closed down Algeria's biggest daily newspaper, Al Moudjahid, for the past six days have agreed to go back to work for a week, union leaders said Tuesday. A union statement said that in order "to allow serious negotiations to take place in a relaxed atmosphere" members voted on Monday night "to resume work temporarily on Wednesday and for no more work than a week." Management was not immediately available for comment. It failed on Monday in a judicial attempt to force the 500 workers and journalists to end the strike. Published in French, Al Moudjahid was for years the organ of the former ruling National Liberation Front. The strikers want to be entitled to hold shares in an 11-title newspaper group the FLN set up in September. The FLN says only party members can hold shares. The socialist FLN ruled Algeria from independence in 1962 until riots by Muslim fundamentalists last June led to the formation of an independent caretaker government to prepare for a general election, now due on Dec. 26. Opposition parties accused the FLN of trying to maintain a monopoly in the press.

Turkish airlines office fire-bombed

COPENHAGEN (R) — The Turkish Airlines office in central Copenhagen was set on fire Monday night, probably by a petrol bomb, police said Tuesday. Police in a patrol car put out the blaze with a fire extinguisher. It was not clear who threw the bomb, which caused damage but no injuries, the police said. Members of a Kurdish group protesting against Turkey's treatment of its Kurdish minority occupied the airline office briefly in March last year, but were evicted by police using tear-gas. About 30,000 Turks live in Denmark.

Norway introduces visas for Moroccans

RABAT (R) — Norway has introduced visas for Moroccans entering the country, the Norwegian embassy said Monday. An embassy statement said the measure came into force last Friday. Denmark introduced visas for Moroccans in May.

British Labour opposes Turkey's EC entry now

NICOSIA (R) — Britain's shadow Foreign Secretary Gerald Kaufman said Tuesday a Labour government will oppose Turkey's admission to the European Community (EC) as long as it continues to occupy northern Cyprus. "We shall say to the Turkish government that as long as Turkish troops are in Cyprus the British government will oppose Turkey's admission to the community," Mr. Kaufman told reporters before a meeting with President George Vassiliou. "We are, I hope a friend of Turkey and we will make clear that our friendship is affected by this dispute," he said. Mr. Kaufman, in Cyprus on a two-day visit at the invitation of the House of Representatives, said a Labour government would make a Cyprus settlement a foreign policy priority. "The problem of Cyprus is an illegal Turkish invasion which has divided the island. In government we will take the initiative, we will make it one of our priorities to try to bring about a solution through action in the United Nations, in the Commonwealth, in the European Community, in NATO and bilaterally with the Turkish government."

Counterfeiting ring cracked, forgers arrested in Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP) — Undercover security agents have cracked a major counterfeiting ring forging Lebanese and European passports, entry visas for the United States and university degrees, a police spokesman said Tuesday.

Two forgers were arrested, said the spokesman. But the ringleader and his chief assistant remain at large.

Police had reported that forgers were arrested in a security crackdown on Oct. 22, but provided no details of their activities or identities.

After the interrogations were completed Tuesday, the news blackout was lifted, said the spokesman.

He identified those arrested as Ghaliy Rai and Youssef Rkein, both Lebanese.

Posing as potential clients, the security agents had been monitoring Mr. Rai and Mr. Rkein for several weeks, visiting them often in their separate apartments. On Oct. 22, they finally arrested them while proudly displaying some of their products, the spokesman said.

The documents included 12 Lebanese, four Danish and three Cypriot passports; 150 forged Palestinian refugees identity cards; and 36 Lebanese university degrees in law, political science, business administration, Arabic, English and French literature.

The security agents also found six visa stamps bearing the insignia of the United States embassy in Nicosia, Cyprus, and two of

the Lebanese embassy in Stockholm.

The spokesman would not say how many forged visas, passports and college degrees might already be in use, and refused to go into details of the interrogation.

But he said all countries that might be affected by the forged documents have been notified through diplomatic channels.

He said international counterfeiting experts were secretly flown to Beirut in recent days to help immigration officers at various entry points and airline employees at check-in counters at the airport detect forged visas and passports.

Also, the internal security department purchased "ultraviolet scanning equipment" that detect forgeries, the spokesman said.

The ringleader, identified by police as Youssef Nawfal, ran a printing press. He was believed hiding inside the 'Ain Al Hilweh refugee camp in southern Lebanon since the arrest of his accomplices in Beirut, the spokesman said.

But there was no word of the whereabouts of the fourth member of the group, Hassan Karaki.

Mr. Karaki, the police spokesman said, is an active member of the Hizbollah, which is believed to be the parent organization of smaller factions holding most of the Western hostages held in Lebanon.

It was not clear if the two others already in police custody also are Hizbollah members.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	Le Mouet est a Vous
19:00	News in French
19:15	Alman
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Kate and Alice
21:00	Comos
22:00	News in English
22:30	Equal Justice
PRAYER TIMES	
06:30	Fajr
07:54	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:19	Dhuhr
14:19	Asr
16:45	Maghreb
18:04	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Sweid, Tel. 510740	
Assumption of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church, Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation, Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church, Tel. 661757	
Terzianita Church, Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation, Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church, Tel. 623383, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church, Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church, Tel. 772561	
St. Ephraim Church, Tel. 771751	
Assumption International Church, Tel. 685326	
Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tel. 811295	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Tel. 623824, 654932	
Church of the Nazarene, Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
Slight drop in temperatures will take place and some clouds will appear at various altitudes. Winds will be westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm.	
Amman: Min./max. temp. 9 / 20	
Aqaba: 14 / 25	
Dera: 8 / 21	
Jordan Valley: 15 / 26	
Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 23, Aqaba 27. Humidity readings: Amman 37 per cent, Aqaba 30 per	

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:	
Dr. Mohammad Abadi	778999
Dr. Adel Dabbas	612177
Dr. Fakhri Bilal	625778
Dr. Hussein Haddad	731267
First pharmacy	661912
Second pharmacy	778536
Al Aqaba pharmacy	637855
Nazareth pharmacy	623872
Al Salem pharmacy	636730
Yerush pharmacy	644945
Shamsi pharmacy	637660
REBID:	
Dr. Khalil Majid Sababih	(-)
Al Shams pharmacy	(775825)
ZARQA:	
Abdullah Abu Hameid	(-)
Khalifa pharmacy	95417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Emergency	630341
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	773121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630331
Hotel Complaints	603800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	897467
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	623101
Repairs	623101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100

HOSPITALS

Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	06-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	06-53200
HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	513813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn.	642384
Akshid Maternity, J. Amn.	642444
Jabal Amman Maternity	626666
Mafus, J. Amman	626666
Palestine, Shmeisani	664171
Shmeisani Hospital	664255
University Hospital	664255
Al-Mudhar Hospital	667222
The Islamic, Abdali	6661272
Abdali, Abdali	6661272
Islamic, Al-Mulajun	777101
Al-Bashir, J. Arafurah	775111
Army, Marka	391611
Marka, Sisi Hospital	622040
Amal Hospital	674111
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)9833
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)5020
Um Sals Hospital	(09)9567

Youth conference to address region's problems

AMMAN (Petra) — An international youth conference will be held at the International Baccalaureate school on Nov. 24 with some 130 youths attending.

Mohammad Ulayyan, head of the preparatory committee for the conference, who is also president of the Students Council at the school, said the conference will discuss a number of subjects on the history of Jordan and the Middle East. It will also address the role of international organisations in dealing with local issues such as problems of the environment, water shortages and the difficulties encountered by Jordan and other Middle East countries.

He added that conferees will exchange ideas on means of solving problems facing the youth, and forging closer cooperation among world youth to contribute towards ensuring a better future for the coming generations.

The conference aims, among other things, at orienting the youth on Jordan, its economic and political life, its history and role in the region as well as its tourist attractions.

Taking part in the six-day conference are 130 youths from Jordan, Syria, Bahrain, Germany, India, Kenya, America, Tanzania, Belgium, Greece, Malaysia, Singapore and Pakistan.



University of Jordan President Fawzi Gharaibeh Tuesday discusses with Arab cultural attaches

ways of addressing the problems of non-Jordanian Arab students

University official discusses problems of non-Jordanian students

AMMAN (J.T.) — University of Jordan President Fawzi Gharaibeh Tuesday exchanged views with a number of Arab cultural attaches and advisors accredited to Jordan on means of overcoming difficulties facing the 1,548 Arab students who are attending the university.

Dr. Gharaibeh voiced the university's wish to provide all the necessary facilities and to help these students overcome any problems they may face. He also stressed the need for continuing coordination and cooperation between the Arab cultural attaches and the university, adding that the university welcomes coordination with them in areas of

interest to students such as registration issues and reports on students' performance.

He called on the attaches and advisors to periodically meet with the students of their respective countries who are attending classes here to define their problems in preparation for discussing them with the university.

The meeting was attended by the University Vice-President for Administrative Affairs Sulaiman Arabiyat, Dean of the Student Affairs Department Mohammad Khreizat and Director of the Admission and Registration Department Abdul Hamid Al Sabagh.

Later, the attaches visited the university library and the student activities compound where they were briefed on the various services provided to students at the university.

Also Tuesday, the university vice president for scientific faculties affairs, Mohammad Al Maqonsi, received the scientific attaché at the Italian Foreign Ministry Michele Miele and Giovanni Benenati from the Italian embassy's cultural department.

Discussions during the meeting focussed on means of enhancing scopes of scientific cooperation between the university and the Italian universities.

Mohammad's Army prosecutor calls for stiff penalties

By Ahmad Kreishan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The public prosecutor at the State Security Court in Marka Tuesday demanded that the court impose penalties in accordance with the provisions of the law on 18 members of a group calling itself "Mohammad's Army," who are accused of carrying out a series of terrorist activities and planning others in Jordan.

Addressing the court, the public prosecutor also demanded that the court order the confiscation of all the accused men's property, cars and weapons found and used by them in their attacks and sabotage activities.

The prosecutor, Major Muhammad Hijazi, said the defendants had been charged with trying to change the country's constitution through illegitimate means, possession of explosives, hand grenades, and automatic weapons they had been using or planning to use in terrorist activities, attempting to kill several citizens by planting bombs under their cars and raising money in an illegal manner to finance their operations.

The prosecutor cited the testimonies of several witnesses supporting these charges and the confession of the defendants themselves to committing such actions.

He said that police officer, Issa Al Najji's testimony had agreed with the statement of the first defendant, Fawad Danesh, and the fourth defendant, Mustafa, who had told the court that they had planted explosives under the witness' car last July.

The prosecutor also cited testimony by witness Nancy Haddad who had told the court that last January she suffered severe injuries in a car bomb blast in front of her home at the Gandawel neighbourhood near Wadi Seer. He said the first, second and third defendants had admitted that they had planted the explosives under the Haddad family car which later went off.

In November of last year, a liquor store at Yarmouk Street of Amman was attacked by automatic fire causing the loss of most of the store's contents, according to the witness and store owner Walid Lutfi.

The liquor store episode was corroborated by the testimonies given by the second, fifth, sixth and eighth defendants.

Another witness, Khalil Azzimier Ali, owner of the Jordan Blue-Up Club and Restaurant at Biad-er Wadi Seer, told the court that someone had poured gasoline into the restaurant and set the place on fire. This was identical to a statement of the first witness, Fawad Danesh, the court prosecutor said.

The court judge, Yusef Faouri, adjourned the session until next Monday.

300 workers threatened with loss of jobs because of consumer tax

By Elias Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter
and agency dispatches

AMMAN — The consumer tax imposed on Jordanian factories producing national products took its first toll Tuesday when at least 300 workers employed in the food industries were either laid off or warned that their dismissal was imminent.

The affected workers gathered in front of the Federation of Jordanian Labour Union (FJLU) Tuesday in protest against their dismissal or imminent lay-off, calling on the federation to intervene on their behalf and ensure their rights.

According to the protesters, the measures for further layoffs were being discussed and factory owners attributed the measure to the newly-imposed consumer tax, which was considered a severe blow to local industries.

Federation Secretary General Abdul Halim Khaddam said that his office was not informed of any dismissals.

"We think the workers were



Abdul Halim Khaddam

told by the factory owners that they would be dismissed so that they would create a situation through which they can exercise pressure on the government to force it to rescind its measure concerning the imposition of the consumer tax," he said in a statement to the Jordan Times.

"Even if workers get dismissed, or if the factories are closed temporarily by their owners in their show of protest against or in support of their stand over the consumer tax issue, the federation would insist that workers get paid in

full," said Mr. Khaddam.

He said that the federation council has decided not to interfere in the dispute which concerns the industrial businesses and the government alone.

Meanwhile, Jordanian columnists on Tuesday attacked government austerity measures raising import duties and the price of bread.

Some officials fear Jordan could face popular unrest because of lower living standards, increasing poverty and rising unemployment — estimated at one-third of the work force.

The Kingdom, acting under IMF directives, is trying to slash its \$8 billion foreign debt and revive its aid-dependent economy.

The government announced on Sunday that bread, the main diet of Jordan's poor, will be added to the list of commodities subsidised only for those with ration cards.

Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Ali Abul Ragheb said the measure would save about JD 5 million a year.

The move was immediately

attacked by local newspapers and some parliament deputies.

"By the end of the year if the government continued on the same track there will be dozens of coupons in the pocket of each citizen but his other pocket will be empty of money," said a Sawi Al Shaab columnist.

On November 4, the government raised taxes on imported luxury items such as cosmetics and alcohol, while cutting customs duties by 10 per cent on 205 basic imported items such as shoes and school books.

Jordan's Finance Minister and Central Bank governor have refused to comment on the austerity measures included in the International Monetary Fund agreement drafted in October.

Jordan's 1991 spending on subsidies will be about JD 60 million — mostly for bread, but also rice, sugar, milk and animal fodder.

Next year's still unpublished budget is expected to allocate JD 40 million for food subsidies.

Desert safari participants near destination

MAAN (J.T.) — Wednesday will be the last day of a week-long car race involving Spanish and Arab competitors heading for Aqaba from Amman following desert routes spotted by desert castles and other archaeological sites.

The participants, together with a group of journalists and camera crews following the race, arrived in the ancient Nabatean city of Petra and were scheduled to continue the safari to Wadi Rum before reaching the port city Thursday.

The participants have already visited the Dead Sea, the Zarga Ma'in spa south of Madaba and the southern city of Karak on their way to Aqaba, according to a statement by the organisers, the Spanish magazine El Sol and the Ministry of Tourism.

The 68-member group is making the trip as part of the Ministry of Tourism's drive to market Jordan abroad, the organisers said.

The car race, part of the Kingdom's celebrations marking His Majesty King Hussein's birthday Thursday, was filmed and telecast to Spanish viewers in Spain together with the various archaeological and tourist sites the competitors were passing by during the race.

Members of the group interviewed by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, expressed their deep impression with Jordan's archaeological treasures, its hospitable people and the wonderful weather. They said that they had been enjoying the visits to different areas in the Kingdom.

The rally was organised through the efforts of the Ministry of Tourism working in conjunction with the national air carrier, Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ) and tour operators from Jordan and Spain.

The Spanish El Sol magazine had organised a similar race in Morocco last year.

Programme to involve schools in community

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), is embarking on a \$41,000 pilot project aimed at enhancing the role of schools in development of human resources, according to Director General of Education at the ministry Thouran Obaidat.

In an interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Obaidat said 30 schools will be used for the purpose of the project. He noted that the ministry will prepare a practical training manual and will direct headmasters of the schools involved to play an active role in promoting the project.

Criticism of government plans to impose consumer tax grows

By Ziyad Al Shileh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The consumer tax imposed on local industries will have very negative consequences on the national economy because it will open the way for imported products to compete with national goods, according to Jordan Businessmen Association (JBA) President Mandouh Abu Hassan.

The consumer tax will also lead to the loss of hundreds of millions of dinars from the country to be invested in more profitable areas, a move which would deal a very hard blow to industrial development and worsen the unemployment problem facing Jordan, according to Mr. Abu Hassan.

His statement to the Jordan Times and Al Rai' dailies coincided Tuesday with the publication of a one page notice in the local press by the Amman Chamber of Industry attacking the government's decision to impose the consumer tax as detrimental to Jordanian industry.

Consumer tax is to be exacted from the consumer upon his buying any national product manufactured in the country and not from the industrial businesses themselves, said Mr. Abu Hassan. The process was bound to bring heavy losses to the national industry as people would buy more imported products which will sell at similar prices, he said.

Mr. Abu Hassan said the imposition of the consumer tax was like transforming Jordan into a socialist economic sys-

tem which has already been abandoned by the socialist countries themselves.

The government had acted unilaterally without consulting the business community and without taking into account the views of others, he said. Such a policy is not logical and can never serve the economic policies which the government is trying to apply, Mr. Abu Hassan said.

He added that the government should have opted for democratic means like holding consultations and conducting studies before making appropriate decisions that would serve national interests.

Mr. Abu Hassan wondered if the government had first consulted with its Economic Advisory Council before embarking on this step which, the government said, was necessitated by the requirements of the economic restructuring programme as advocated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Mr. Abu Hassan said by imposing a consumer tax on local products and reducing customs duty on imported commodities, the government has dealt a severe blow to local industries.

He called on the government to re-examine its position and consult with local economists before embarking on such measures while at the same time listening to advice from the IMF.

If the local industries sustain losses, more people will be laid off, aggravating the already serious unemployment

crisis in Jordan, Mr. Abu Hassan said.

At a meeting with the minister of industry, trade and supply Monday, members and the president of the Amman Chamber of Industry aired their grievances and echoed Mr. A. H. Hassan's apprehensions and complaints.

Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Ali Abul Ragheb told the meeting that the government was forced to take the step to reduce the deficit in the fiscal budget by nearly JD 80 million.

Despite the assurances that the government would re-examine the situation and consult with the industrialists, the Amman chamber of industry published a statement in the local press Tuesday expressing their total objection to the consumer tax which, it said, came at a time when the Kingdom was facing a series of economic ordeals in the wake of the Gulf crisis.

The Chamber of Industry presented a 12 point argument saying there would be severe damage to the national economy if the consumer tax is imposed.

The statement urged the government to freeze the decision, to set up a joint committee from the chamber and the concerned government offices to scrutinise the situation and to work out a formula that would take into account sufficient revenues for the treasury but would not impede the development in the country or act to increase the burden on local citizens.

Royal Jordanian considering new routes to Berlin, Jakarta

By Nidal M. Ibrahim
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Royal Jordanian Airlines (RJ), which recently reopened its route to Beirut and inaugurated new ones to Colombo and Toronto, is conducting market feasibility studies on possible routes to Berlin and Jakarta, Indonesia, according to an official with the national air carrier.

Hussein Dabbas, assistant vice president for marketing, stressed that the decision of whether to open the new routes will be based strictly on the findings of market studies. Still, Royal Jordanian officials see the cautious, well-planned expansion that has characterised the opening of the new routes to be necessary to maintain RJ's market share.

"The nature of airlines is growth," Mr. Dabbas said. "Unless you grow, you start dying. It's a dynamic industry that requires continued

growth."

The new routes to Colombo and Toronto were opened only after extensive market studies to determine how many passengers would be interested in the new routes and the potential growth in those markets, Mr. Dabbas said. The careful planning has paid off as both routes are performing according to expectations, he said.

"The routes we have started are doing very well," Mr. Dabbas said. "Especially the route to Colombo."

While it is still early to determine the success of the recently-inaugurated route to Toronto, he said that bookings were "excellent."

Jakarta and Berlin have drawn RJ officials' interest for different reasons, but both promise to allow Royal Jordanian to penetrate new surrounding markets.

The reinvigoration of Germany, coupled with the decision to seat the new govern-

ment in Berlin, has impressed upon RJ management the potential of that route, Mr. Dabbas said. "Very soon it will be one of the most important cities in Europe," he said.

Jakarta, he said, is attractive because Indonesia is a major country with a huge Muslim population. At the same time, he added, Royal Jordanian flights to south East Asia are limited, restricting its drawing power in that market. "So it's definitely a very viable market to operate in," he said.

The slow pace of expansion being undertaken by Royal Jordanian is partly a result of its recent financial troubles. Plagued by losses from the Gulf war and the resulting high insurance premiums and fuel prices, RJ officials estimated losses to be near \$100 million.

The airline is just now returning to normal and the introduction of new routes is an outgrowth from this normalisation process, officials recently said.

English charity rushing aid to dying Iraqi children

By Ica Wahbeh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — "Unless substantial (medical and food) supplies are found and sanctions eased, hundreds of thousands more frail, sick and young people (in Iraq) will die needlessly before the end of winter."

These words of warning came from an English pharmacist, now in Amman, who will soon be making her second visit to Iraq since September when she was there and assessed the urgent needs in Iraq, mostly pediatric hospitals.

The pharmacist, Angela Bowman, is part of a five-member group belonging to an English charity, Medical Aid for Iraq, which plans to proceed to Iraq after a short stopover in Amman. The charity was formed at the conclusion of the Gulf war and, according to Reverend Randall Moll, a member of the group, it has a lot to thank to the London-based New Statesman, a weekly periodical, which helped form it.

According to Rev. Moll, the purpose of the charity is to provide medicine and equipment to hospitals in Iraq, especially children hospitals in Karbala and Basra.

"U.N. sanctions which result in the needless suffering and death of innocent children can have no moral justification in a humane society," said Rev. Moll. He is accompanied by his wife, Elizabeth, a nurse, son, Duncan, a computer expert who will help provide logistic

assessments of the hospital needs and Elizabeth Gatliff, another nurse.

The reverend, an Anglican clergyman who says the charity is not a political organisation, stresses that ordinary English people (who helped raise the aid money) "have no argument" with the Iraqi people.

"We make no political judgement; we are ordinary English people who, like many others, feel appalled and distressed at the needless suffering of many ordinary Iraqi families like ours."

The group has travelled over land from the United Kingdom to Amman. The reason for the stopover, before leaving for Iraq, is that the main part of the medical supplies needed in Iraq was purchased in Amman with the help of the doctors from the Arab Emergency Health Committee, based in the Jordanian capital, who were "very helpful in negotiating with Amman drug companies to provide medicine at reasonable prices and help with the necessary documentation."

The group, which will take

\$25,000 worth of aid to Iraq, has only medicine and equipment "expressly asked for by the doctors in Iraq." The equipment, mainly for pediatric use, but also for adult hospitals, includes IV cannula, for intra-venous feeding.

Rev. Moll said that the group "feels strongly" about three things. First, he reiterated the "unjustified" use of U.N. food and medicine sanctions against the Iraqis. Then, he praised the Jordanian doctors who assisted his group and are volunteering time and effort to help the needy. Finally, he said that the group was impressed by the way Jordanians were willing to help and meet the needs of refugees of all nationalities, "unlike the Europeans."

"With the help of our friends in Jordan, we can do something to relieve the sufferings of our fellow human beings following the Gulf war. But only when the hearts of the world's major powers have been softened by the cries of innocent Iraqi children, will the unfolding tragedy be averted," said the reverend.

Minister reviews ties with S. Korea

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Abdul Karim Al Kabarti Monday received at the ministry the South Korean ambassador to Jordan and discussed with him scopes of cooperation between Jordan and South Korea and the prospects of launching promotion campaigns in Korea to acquaint the public with Jordan's touristic attractions.

French team winds up study on how to preserve Petra rocks

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A three-member French scientific team has wound up a two-week study in Jordan and left for home to embark on laboratory tests and further studies designed to determine the harmful elements affecting the rocks of the ancient Nabatean city of Petra.

The French scientists are carrying with them samples of the rock dug up through their work at the ancient site.

"In the King's Tomb we have found a variety of rocks and different minerals," said team leader Pierre Deletie in a statement to the Jordan Times.

The team from the French National Electricity Company had conducted preliminary tests at the rocks in and around the King's Tomb in the ancient city with the aim of determining the causes behind the corrosion of rocks.

"We found minerals like sulphate, gipsom, quartz and ox-

ides in and around the tomb," said Mr. Deletie.

The technical team took samples at different levels of the tomb.

"We chose this tomb to conduct the study because it represents all types of mineralogical evolutions in Petra," Mr. Deletie said.

The team, which will head to France, will take the samples to carry out laboratory tests in a bid to determine the best means for protecting the ancient city and providing maintenance and restoration to the various archaeological sites.

"We will be able to see the importance of water (on the rocks), the distance of the rock and the walls and compare the findings with other studies," Mr. Deletie said. The biggest problem the team has found, in terms of alteration, is the speed at which the rock erodes. "We have studied this problem in sights all around

the Mediterranean in France where the climate is similar to that of Petra," said Mr. Deletie.

"In a few months," he added, "the results will come out and then we can find a treatment for the rock."

Because the rocks in Petra are ancient, it is necessary to find out the exact speed of the rock erosion; so that the team can apply a treatment that complements the evolution.

There is a rock very similar to that of Petra in the north east of France, he said. "We have studied this rock during a period of one year and I think we can use the results of the sand stone on the treatment of the Petra rocks," Mr. Deletie said.

The treatment will be local and can take about a few hours to take effect, according to Mr. Deletie. "We will begin the treatment of the rocks on the samples we took and then apply it to specific areas in Petra."

WHAT'S GOING ON

- ★ Exhibition entitled "The Arab Traditional Home, Selected Items of our Heritage" by Hana Sadeq Burdon at Babadna Gallery, Gardens Street.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Graphic Arts of the 60s" (from the Federal Republic of Germany) at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation gallery (open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.).
- ★ Exhibition of traditional embroidery and handmade items at the Marriott Hotel.
- ★ Exhibition by Iraqi artist Samira Abdul Wahab at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Jordan Times

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Shamir's new tune

THERE is really nothing new in Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's announcement Monday that Israel will not relinquish the Arab occupied territories come rain or sunshine. What is strange about it is that it was coined on the premise that Israeli territory is just too small for comfort and cannot therefore be yielded back to the Arabs. "We need the necessary minimum of space," Shamir was quoted as saying at a meeting with the visiting South African President F.W. de Klerk, "because Israel's measurements are small."

The Israeli prime minister would have been more correct in rationalising his country's design on Arab territories according to his own small perspective on the ongoing peace process. But this is besides the point. The latest rendition by the Israeli prime minister on the prospects for peace in the Middle East may have been intended to send chills across the Israeli-Arab Armistice lines and appease his own Likud constituency who have panicked lately at the prospects of having to trade land for peace. One has got to view Shamir's hard line posture on the peace process also against the background of his struggle for the continued leadership of the Likud bloc and for keeping the premiership. In this context the Israeli leader may be targeting Ariel Sharon who by some accounts at least is coveting Shamir's place. The Israeli establishment has hitherto been advancing biblical reasons for holding on to the West Bank including East Jerusalem. The shifting of emphasis to space rather than to the Old Testament could therefore also be seen as a prelude to the next stage of negotiations with the Arab side where the issue of security and secure borders can be expected to figure highly on Israel's agenda. This may explain in part also the timing of the Israeli Knesset's latest resolution calling the Syrian Golan Heights non-negotiable and demanding unabated colonisation of the strategic plateau. As territorial compromises appear to be the name of the game in the next round of Arab-Israeli talks, Shamir must be aiming to strengthen his bargaining position vis-a-vis the Arab territories with a view to weakening Arab insistence that their territories be handed back in toto within the framework of any permanent peace accords that could emerge from the peace process.

What all these ominous developments boil down to is that the Arab parties to the negotiating peace process are up against a formidable negotiating partner who is determined to call for more and more Arab compromises including territorial ones. The Arab rebuttal must be loud and clear: The Palestinians have already made many territorial compromises, first within the framework of the partition plan of 1947, and secondly when they also accepted U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. Any additional compromises from the Arab camp would render any peace agreement a suspect and not worthy of the ink it is written in.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Tuesday called on the Arab and Muslim countries to unite and end the current blockade imposed on Iraq if the United States fails to impose the international legitimacy and U.N. Security Council resolutions on Israel. At least, this can be done by the Arabs and Muslims whether they support or oppose the peace process under the U.N.-Soviet umbrella, the paper added. It is unreasonable to watch the Israelis killed and the Palestinians continuing to suffer because of a double standard policy that is being exercised in the name of the United Nations and the international legality, said the paper. The paper said that it took the world community 42 years before taking a small step towards resolving the Palestinian problem and nothing has been done yet to force the Israelis to comply with the U.N. resolutions. The Arabs and Muslims should seize the opportunity of the peace process and play their cards well so as to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions and guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people in their homeland, called the paper. It said that it is not true that the Arabs and Muslims do not hold any cards for negotiations and that it is enough to remind the Americans of their aggression on Iraq to force that country to respect the international legality to ensure the success of their quest to achieve a just and durable peace that entails full withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied Arab lands. The paper said that unless that happens, the Arabs and Muslims should not hesitate to end the blockade on the blockade on the Iraqi people who have been unjustly suffering in the name of the international legitimacy.

WHAT the Arabs understand is that President Bush's initiative, which was based on the international legitimacy and U.N. Security Council resolutions, will be implemented in full; and therefore they expect the Bush administration to honour its promises and help reestablish a lasting peace in the Middle East, said Sawt Al Shabab daily Tuesday. The paper, however, drew attention to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's statement Monday in which he told the visiting South African president that the Jewish state was holding on to the occupied Arab territories and totally rejected the idea of exchanging land for peace with the Arab states. With this statement, said the paper, Shamir has openly declared his government's intentions and reaffirmed its hardened position which was earlier displayed at the Madrid conference. The paper said that the Israelis have "obviously" prepared their evil plans to sabotage the peace process and have prepared land mines to abort the negotiations over the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions. If the Israelis do not see the changing world and are not aware of the new "situations and the need to build a new world order," said the paper, it is the duty of the United States to see to it that Mr. Shamir and his government comply with the international legitimacy, carry out U.N. resolutions and end their occupation of Arab land.

Economic Forum

Treading on a minefield?

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

I STRONGLY feel these days that the economic policy of Jordan is treading on a minefield and I am really disheartened by the socio-economic ramifications that might follow. I do pray that our economic policy managers find their way safely through that land although I cannot see how.

The point is that these managers have started experimenting with more of the medicines of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) before clearing the awful stock of economic problems which have been straining every nerve of our society and economy, namely high costs of living, unemployment and inadequate growth rates. It is very well known that they are not embarking on the new measures out of their choice or liking. But this, unfortunately, is not a satisfactory consolation because it does not change the final outcome.

The new measures relating to lifting or reducing subsidies on certain consumer goods, imposing value added tax on some domestic products and cutting tariff rates on a variety of imports may make things worse although they could contribute to the improvement of the fiscal position. It looks as though the 1988 story of currency devaluation is about to be played all over again. In those days we were facing economic hardships and some of us thought that devaluation of the dinar will be the elixir for a very glorious economic life. We devalued our currency and the hardships ballooned into a crisis which shook the very foundations of our economy and society.

Contrary to advanced countries, developing countries lack the sophistication and weapons needed to impose economic discipline, especially in the field of prices. Thus in the case of currency devaluation, for example, prices climb up by more than the percentage of devaluation and thereby outweigh the competitive edge supposed to be given to domestic products. Likewise, the lifting or cutting of subsidies on certain consumer items will spark a price rise that will spill out into the whole economy and serve as a pretext for wholesalers and retailers of all kinds of goods and services to push up their prices. Once the inflation spiral starts, it will be most difficult to stop because the stage will have been set for it and its very movement needs time to work itself out.

Inflation will inevitably soar, the impact of the purported wage increase will be more than neutralised and we will end up in a worse shape. And it will be difficult in this case to talk about reducing the budget deficit in the longer run because the government itself is the biggest consumer and has now to spend more to acquire the same goods and services it used to buy.

The simultaneous imposition of consumer tax on domestic products and the reduction in customs duties on imported goods was a mistake, at least in the tactical sense, because it served a painful notice that the doctrine of free international trade and thereby the interests of great economic powers come first. No domestic manufacturer who has been deafened by the rhetoric on protecting national industries and encouraging investment will be

able to comprehend and later accept the notion that these measures are needed to avoid the distortion of world markets on which the free trade dogma is based. (And who blames him?)

The saddest consolation for domestic manufacturers is to tell them that the new measures will motivate them to improve their competitiveness. Such improvement does not happen overnight but takes years to be accomplished because it is firmly tied to the structural make-up of industries. The crucial question therefore is what and how the very survival of domestic enterprises is going to be guaranteed until that improvement materialises. Most probably some of them will not survive; this implies the destruction of both capital formation (past investments) and jobs. (Remember the unemployment problem?)

The reduction of tariff rates on imported products was wrong and, because it was coupled with more tax on domestic products, was most provocative. It, moreover, stimulates imports in a country whose economic crisis originated in high import levels. More imports mean lower growth rates as well. (Remember our inadequate growth rate?). The IMF people were not wise to demand or insist on it. But, anyhow, these people never claimed to be the best brains; they made a point and apparently we picked it up.

Again, the economic policy of Jordan is trading a minefield and needs utmost discretion and a lot of prayers and luck to walk safely out of it.

What price forcible Kuwaiti liberation?

By M.S. Rajan

IT is good that Kuwait is free so soon. Many other states/people have had to wait for their freedom much longer (if not indefinitely). No doubt, Kuwaitis have had to pay a heavy price for their liberation, but, it seems, the rest of the world had to pay a much heavier price still!

No one is opposed, or could be opposed, to the independence of Kuwait (or any other state). It deserved it as much as any other. The question is only whether the manner of its liberation from Iraqi invasion/occupation is worth the terrible price paid by Kuwait and other nations of the world. A sovereign, independent, state for many years, a member of the United Nations, of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), of the Arab League, and many other international organisations and movements — Kuwait is entitled to that independence, and the right of self-defence too of that independence — but at what price to itself and many other states?

Was the quick liberation of Kuwait worth the price for the havoc caused by the war to Kuwait itself (apart from the havoc it has caused for Iraq)? The terrible havoc caused to liberate Kuwait has almost very little to do with the Kuwait before Iraqi occupation, except for territory. Preliminary press reports have indicated the high price Kuwait and Kuwaitis paid for their liberation by the coalition forces — in men and materials. It will take some years, and a lot of money (estimated to be \$100 billions), for reconstructing the war-damaged Kuwait. Couldn't Kuwait have waited for peaceful liberation from Iraqi occupation — which, of course, would have taken some months, if not years? That Kuwait would become free again was, I believe, never in question, because there was worldwide condemnation of Iraqi aggression/occupation of Kuwait, including by other Arab states — by the United Nations, by the NAM, by the Western and Eastern States (including the Soviet Union). Indeed, it is difficult to recall any other issue in history which received so unanimous backing.

That Kuwait and Kuwaitis

wanted quick liberation from Iraqi occupation, is perfectly understandable, and reasonable too, but could they not have foreseen the terrible consequences of liberation urgently and by a multinational force? Would they not have done better by waiting for peaceful liberation, which would have taken a little longer; that would have, on balance, been better for the country and the people. After all, in human affairs, decisions by nations or individuals are taken on the formula of balance of advantage and for achieving objectives over a period, not instantly and at a higher price than a nation or an individual is willing to pay? That Kuwait is able and willing to pay this price (because of its wealth) does not mean that all the Kuwaitis were/will be willing to endure the terrible human suffering they had to go through.

"The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and its liberation by a multinational force has churned up the somewhat stable inter-state relations in the post-Cold War world. The ongoing détente and its worldwide beneficial impacts have nearly vanished."

What, then, was the reason or justification for its quick and forcible liberation? It makes little sense — in terms of the terrible worldwide, long term, consequences of international community has to suffer, a part from what Kuwait and Kuwaitis are suffering.

Consequences to other nations

The war for the liberation of Kuwait has had far-reaching consequences to many other nations and for the system and trends in international relations. This, despite the tremendous and even unique solidarity shown by the world community with the cause of freedom of Kuwait and its people. These other nations have become innocent, and hapless, victims of Kuwait's insistent

desire for quick and forcible liberation from Iraqi occupation. The liberation might have achieved immense (and understandable) sentimental satisfaction for Kuwaitis, but would they care to assess the equally immense harm done to the rest of the world, including the solidarity of the Arabs and their causes?

The Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and its liberation by a multinational force has churned up the somewhat stable inter-state relations in the post-cold war world. The ongoing détente and its worldwide beneficial impacts have nearly vanished. It has led to a sort of entente between the United States and the Soviet Union at the cost of upsetting many other large and/or smaller nations. The hoped for, incipient, multipolar world has been nearly destroyed. It has even resulted in paralysing a bipolar world, which, in retrospect, seems now far better than the "unipolar" world Kuwait liberation has ended up. This new "world order" is potentially destructive of the "sovereign equality" of members of the United Nations guaranteed by the world organisation. There would be hardly any "checks and balances" to the hegemony of the United States over the rest of the world community. The U.S.-led multilateral forces the Gulf have already demonstrated how the U.N. Security Council's limited mandate on the liberation of Kuwait is no constraint on their extension of the war to achieve their motivated desire of other, illegitimate, objectives, such as destruction of Iraq's political and economic infrastructure, and even the possible overthrow of the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein.

Because of the disagreement of the Soviet Union with the United States on the extension by the latter of the limited U.N. mandate to seek wider U.S. national objectives in the Gulf area (and the U.S. rejection of Soviet peace initiative on the Gulf war too), there is now a powerful factor (though only potential for the time being) for the revival of the cold war between the two great powers. This is besides some other likely contributory causes for the revival of the cold war — the struggle of the three Baltic states for independence backed

by U.S. public opinion, the Soviet alarm at the demonstrative success (for the first time) of the use of new sophisticated arms by the United States, the likely U.S./Western domination of West Asia after the liberation of Kuwait and so on.

Is the liberation of Kuwait by force worth this terrible price for the world community?

The Kuwaiti liberation question has reactivated, only ostensibly though, the United Nations after the new détente, but, in fact, throttled it (especially the great power-dominated, Security Council). Indeed, the manner in which the United States railroaded the dozen resolutions in a short period on the liberation of Kuwait, not only frustrated the optimism of students of international relations/organisations about the revival (after a long slumber) of the activities of the world organisations as one of the beneficial consequences of the new détente, but, more seriously, it is likely to subvert and endanger the organisation by the bamboozling tactics of the United States in getting through the organisation resolutions which essentially promoted the unilateral interests of this lone super power (and its allies/friends).

The harmful consequences of forcible liberation of Kuwait include the destruction of the cause of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the unlikely possibility, ever, of the establishment of the state of Palestine in the Israeli-occupied territories — a major objective of not only the Arab states, but, also many others. What is sad, this result has been, indirectly, brought about by the Arab states, themselves, notably Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and the GCC states.

One other incidental result of the liberation of Kuwait is the enormous strengthening of Israel, economically and militarily, by its traditional supporter, the United States. The fact that Mr. Saddam Hussein, unconvincedly attempting to link the vacation of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait with the vacation by Israel of the occupied Arab territories, has diverted the world's attention from the Israeli exploitation of the Gulf war for its own political, military, aggran-

disement, to the delight of U.S. authorities, and to the detriment of all Arab nations and the PLO.

Because of Iraq's attempt to provoke Israel — by firing the Scud missiles — into involvement on the side of the multinational army, there was the danger of the Israeli use of the nuclear weapons in the Gulf war. Equally, because of the Iraqi threat of use of chemical (and biological too?) weapons against the multinational forces, there was a potential threat of reciprocal use of such weapons by the U.S./British forces. For a while, the Gulf area — and the rest of the world too — lived under the agonising threat of these horrible weapons, with awful consequences, to many other nations too. That these weapons were not, in fact, used should not lead us to ignore the terrible agony that the nations of the world went through, because of the Gulf war — all because of the liberation of Kuwait by force.

Was it worth it for Kuwait or other nations too, to have gone through this agony?

"The eagerness of the United States and the United Kingdom to liberate Kuwait is possibly due to their neocolonial aspirations, in particular, the desire to ensure the subservience of the Gulf states to the former's political and economic interests, especially the supply, regularly and cheaply of oil."

The liberation of Kuwait has also led to the likely domination of Arab nations, especially in the Gulf area, by the United States and its Western allies, sadly with the connivance and/or eagerness of some leading Arab states: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the other Gulf states. This is an extraordinary and post-World War II reversal of the de-colonisation of the world. For the United States (as President Bush himself has said candidly) it is the cheapest war! It has been largely

paid for by other nations (sadly, by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait). In effect, we see an extraordinary, new development (U.S. armed forces serving as mercenary forces).

Already, U.S. official and intellectual sources are reportedly planning a new world order for the Gulf states, which might include a new military/political alliance — a rebirth of the aborted Middle East Defence Organisation of the 1950s, the now-dismantled CENTO and such other contraptions of the 1950s and 1960s. And why not? Some Arab nations seem now to welcome such a development, even at the risk of compromising their independence.

And this possible development has other, far-reaching, consequences to the region, including West Asia and South Asia. The policy and movement of non-alignment in the area (some of those states are already straddling the alignment/non-alignment divide, like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan) would severely hurt the national interests of many non-aligned states of the area. The fact that the United States (and/or the United Kingdom) might not actually be members of such potential alliances ought not to mislead anyone — as it did not, in the case of the defunct CENTO. Some might also question the relevance of non-alignment in a presently "unipolar" world, completely ignoring the crucially important fact that non-alignment has always been against the hegemony of the super/great powers, whether they are one or more. And, once again (as in the 1950s) India would be hard pressed to maintain its policy of non-alignment, partly because (as in the 1950s) Pakistan is likely to participate (as in the case of the old CENTO) in the Western-sponsored military domination of West Asia.

Many nations (as India) which depend on petroleum (and its by-products) from the Gulf area have been severely affected (financially) by the limited supplies presently and for some years of those products — which in turn has had many incidental economic consequences to these nations. Some of them have been (Continued on page 5)

Masri should not throw in the towel

By Salameh Ne'matt

AMMAN — Here we go again. Another reshuffle, we hear, is in the offing, to "broaden the parliamentary base" of Prime Minister Taber Masri's government, which has been unusually plagued by so many deputies seeking a few Cabinet portfolios in yet another reshuffle.

The premier, we are told, has been conducting a series of "consultations" with parliamentary blocs, investing so much of his time to see who becomes minister and who doesn't, a matter which is hardly of priority to us spectators — trying to figure out where the beef is.

The latest reports say that Mr. Masri is fed up with the whole exercise and wants to throw in the towel rather than go through another laborious attempt to patch up a "broad-based" government that cannot be broad unless a majority is happy with the new set up. But, considering that the broadest government one can

perceive in such a parliamentary set up is more or less a 45 vote edge in the 80-member House, it is understandable why the premier is depressed and fed up.

But perhaps what is more depressing in the reshuffle syndrome plaguing us for the third time in less than five months, is what we, observers, cannot understand why the premier should bother with a broad-based government and a reshuffle which will not bring in the Muslim Brotherhood, the only solid political group that has any clear position on major policy matters that are not in line with those of the government.

Can anyone tell us where and how the Constitution Bloc, the Democratic Bloc and the National Bloc differ with the government on the major policies affecting the country? Isn't it ultimately, more or less, the pragmatic, liberal pro-peace government against the dogmatic, ideological anti-peace Brotherhood?

We honestly cannot understand why the premier feels obliged to bring in the Constitution Bloc, the Democratic Bloc and other groups whose difference mostly focus on form rather than substance and who are hardly ashamed of admitting that what they seek barely goes beyond ministerial posts. For it the purpose of the reshuffle is to show support for the government's role in the peace process, it is only the Brotherhood which is genuinely opposed to peace with Israel, and thus, we see no point in appeasing other groups who appear to be playing a spoiler role aimed at winning portfolios and no more. The Constitution Bloc has already expressed its support for the peace negotiations while the Democratic Bloc's representatives (JANDA) were and some are still part of the government which endorsed the peace process.

There is a fine line between playing politics for the sake of confidence votes and playing

honest for the sake of the people, and there is a limit to how far some of us expect our leaders to go to appease groups who have less than little to contribute to our political, economic and social recovery.

Mr. Masri, a man of great integrity, should not be playing for votes that will hardly change anything on the ground if we agreed that 35 deputies would continue to oppose this government and any other government under the present conditions. He need not do that for many reasons some of which are:

Only one-third of our deputies are genuinely opposed to the peace process. These represent the Muslim Brotherhood. The others are jockeying for position with one foot in the government and the other seeking electoral benefits as though either one should be at the expense of the other.

Public opinion polls, conducted by a private agency, indicate that support for the process exceeds 90 per cent in

Jordan and 87 per cent among Palestinians in the occupied territories.

None of the other blocs who are not in the government has any alternative and viable political or economic programme acceptable to the people to offer.

The premier should be able to get enough votes to survive a vote of confidence with the inclusion of Constitution Bloc representatives, and as such, there is no fear of him losing the confidence vote.

Furthermore, we are living a historic phase in our region. Logic suggests that this is not the time to engage in political gymnastics, settling of accounts or jockeying for position that does not strengthen our internal front. The government must act decisively and out of conviction rather than following a policy of appeasement for the sake of appeasement. The political calculation should be based on what is better for the country and not what is better for the govern-

ment. We can live without this or that government, but we cannot live without institutions that ensure continuity on a better course.

Right is its own defence, and if the government will fall for taking the right stand, then let it be. It may be easier said than done, but at least there should be a fight for what is right before anyone throws in the towel.

When the pro-Israel lobby challenged U.S. President George Bush on the granting of loan guarantees to Israel, the president said he would go through with his decision to delay consideration of the loan guarantees even if he had no more than one supporting vote in Congress. He threatened to go with the issue to the people. If so many in the government are convinced that the majority of the people support the government and that Parliament is way too detached from public opinion, isn't it time to say let us go back to the people?

What price Kuwait liberation?

(Continued from page 4)

compensated by the United States and/or the World Bank and its affiliates, but obviously inadequately.

Many South and Southeast Asian states have enormously suffered economically as a result of the Gulf war — from the rise in the prices of petrol and petroleum products, from the cost of assisted return passage of their respective nationals, from the stoppage of the remittances of their nationals, and finally, from the loss of export trade to the Gulf area. Only a few of these states were compensated in some ways. And many Western nations (the United States and the United Kingdom in particular) seem likely to profit most commercially by helping to reconstruct war-torn Kuwait (and possibly Iraq too). Even on the eve of the liberation of Kuwait a large number of Western commercial firms have reportedly signed the contracts in this respect.

Indeed, it is possibly true that the liberation of Kuwait, urgently and by force, by the multinational forces did not take place only because of the appeals from Kuwait or the deep attachment of the United States and other Western partners of the multinational forces for the freedom of Kuwait (for that matter, it is doubtful if all other Arab states were terribly keen either, on the freedom of Kuwait). The eagerness of the United States and the United Kingdom to liberate Kuwait is possibly due to their neocolonial aspirations, in particular, the desire to ensure the subservience of the Gulf states to the former's political and economic interests, especially the supply, regularly and cheaply of oil. Perhaps also, so far as the United States is concerned, it is very likely they desired to put down any Arab nations (Iraq in this case) which were likely to challenge Western allies, in the area, such as Saudi Arabia and Israel, and to punish the PLO and Palestinian population in the area who dared back Iraq. Taking advantage of the threat posed by Iraq to Israel (especially by the firing of Scud missiles) the United States managed to increase enormously U.S. military assistance to Israel.

In effect, by inviting Western military forces to liberate Kuwait, and defend Saudi Arabia, these Arab nations, supported by Egypt and Syria, brought back Western neocolonialism into the Gulf. These Arab nations have been loudly and loosely talking for years about so-called "Arab solutions" to their intra-Arab problems, but in the Kuwait case, they forgot about an "Arab solution" and unashamedly brought back to the area Western neo-colonial forces, which, furthermore, cannot be easily or quickly sent back. It will take a long time for the Arab nations of the Gulf to regain their full freedom of policy and action from the present trends; on the contrary, at least some of them are anxious to retain Western military backing for their undemocratic regimes. Also, in the process, they would give a go-by to their ostensible policy of non-alignment.

The question then is, whether the terribly high cost of liberation of Kuwait, so hastily and by the use of force essentially, from states external to the region, was worth the cost to Kuwait as well as many other states of the world. It does seem to a student of international relations that the

price was/is too high, and to be paid for many years, materially and otherwise too. This is a thousand pities because, apparently, neither Kuwait, nor other Arab states (notably Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria) cared to envisage these awful political/military consequences of their alleged or real desire to liberate Kuwait.

The other side of the medal

Of course, one can reasonably argue that there is no guarantee that Kuwait would have achieved its liberation by peaceful means, even if delayed by some months/years. In the prevalence of real politics in international relations (and despite the general observance by international law by nations, and the existence of the United Nations too), some international problems have remained unsolved for some years — e.g. Tibet, occupied Kashmir, Palestine, Cyprus. The world has the habit of forgetting the existence of these and other problems. Might this not have happened to Kuwait too, had it not been liberated by force and quickly?

Yes! this was possible. But then, there is no — there has never been — any absolute guarantee of the independence of states in the sovereign-nation-state system, as it has been functioning for the last 350 years. A sort of law-of-the-jungle prevails in international relations (despite law of nations and the United Nations) and one is never certain of the independence/liberation of states.

This uncertainty is integral to the sovereign-nation-state system, and is not peculiar to Kuwait, as it is not, to any other independent state. The problems referred to above are bound to be solved some time or the other, peacefully. And there is no guarantee that they would (or could) be solved in the manner Kuwait was liberated.

On the other hand, in the post-war years, nearly 100 states have achieved freedom from colonialism, the latest being Namibia, after a 4-decade struggle. Again, the basic issue is whether or not peaceful liberation, although delayed, is better than forced, instant liberation. Perhaps this is a peculiarly Indian view, because of the benefits India achieved from peaceful liberation of India after a sixty-year peaceful struggle of the Indian people against deeply entrenched British rule.

Regarding Kuwait, it is also arguable if it could ever have been liberated peacefully because of the obdurate determination of the President Saddam Hussein regime to keep it as its 19th province, at any cost and against world opinion.

On the other hand, it is equally arguable that President Saddam Hussein's regime, like all such regimes, is not immortal. But, then, there is no way of ensuring that that regime would (or would not) be succeeded by another with the same obduracy; also, the circumstances of Iraq might also change in leading to a change in Iraq's attitude to Kuwait. After all, such a dramatic change did occur in British ruling circles towards independence of India after the World War II. For instance, why should one assume that the Shiite majority (or the Kurdish minority) would tolerate for ever the present domination of Iraq by a Sunni minority?

In other words, one is back again to the issue raised in the beginning — whether Kuwait li-

beration, urgently and forcibly, was/is worthwhile in its own interest as well as in the interest of many other nations.

Perhaps (again, in an Indian perspective) if Kuwait had achieved its liberation peacefully against Iraqi domination, it would have secured Iraq's good neighbourliness — which it would not, presently and for the foreseeable future, because of the awful consequences of the Gulf war to Iraq. How long would liberated Kuwait depend upon the military clout of other nations for retaining its independence from Iraq? Obviously, Kuwait could never — small as it is — maintain a credible defence posture against the very much bigger and better-armed Iraq. Would it not, then, be better for Kuwait to have had peaceful liberation and friendly separation from Iraq — again, as in the case of India and the United Kingdom?

Because of its continuing military weakness, Kuwait is likely to be perennially indebted not only to the neighbouring Arab states, but also to the United States and the U.K. — which it needs to be repeated, are less motivated by any anxious desire for Kuwaiti independence than in having subservient oil-rich semi-empire under their thumb. In the long run, friendship of Iraq for Kuwait is a more credible defence of the latter's survival as an independent state than subservience to other states, Arab and non-Arab.

The Kuwait regime is promising democratic reforms in a system presently dominated by a single ruling family — and this promise is apparently inspired by external pressures. If and when these promises are fulfilled (or the external pressures are released), with a government run by Palestinians and/or Egyptians (because of the small Kuwaiti population) and with the help of a large non-Arab people — Indians, Pakistanis, Thais, Filipinos etc. — how long can Kuwait tolerate external/internal crutches, and still pretend to be sovereign, independent and equal in the community of nations? And, what is the credibility of such a regime, even if Kuwait regains its former wealth? What was the point of liberation by external forces and antagonising large, powerful, Iraq for ever? — Review of International Affairs, Belgrade.

Syria

(Continued from page 1)

apartheid. "Perhaps Shamir will be the last racist on the globe who adheres to sick overtures, condemned by all peoples of the earth, such as occupation, expansion and settlement," the radio said.

A senior Syrian official said reports that the United States may offer Washington as the compromise venue for the next stage of talks "poses problems for Syria."

The Israelis have urged that Arab-Israeli talks be alternated between the Jewish state and Arab countries.

Most Arab states fear this could be interpreted as recognition of the Jewish state. They want the dialogue continued in Spain or some other neutral country.

The Syrian official, who insisted on anonymity, noted that Syria remains on the U.S. list of countries accused of supporting "terrorism."

'Peace train' be put on track

(Continued from page 1)

His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Taher Masri during his visit here, said that the Palestinian delegation to the Madrid peace conference, which only included personalities from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, excluding Jerusalem, would affect the substance of the actual negotiations with Israel.

"Israel insisted that the Palestinian representation to the peace conference be limited only to the West Bank and Gaza because its aim is to limit the substance of the negotiations to the destiny of only the Palestinians from the occupied territories, excluding Jerusalem," Mr. Hawatmeh stressed.

It was agreed in Madrid that the next round of Palestinian-Israeli bilateral negotiations would discuss the procedure of transferring authority to the Palestinians of the occupied territories. Although the Palestinian negotiators insist that self-government is a transitional phase toward complete Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories it occupied in 1967, Israel has not indicated that it was willing to do so.

Palestinian delegates to the Madrid conference, who were in Amman recently on their way to the occupied territories, had told the Jordan Times that the opinion of the Syria-based DFLP, one of the largest factions in the PLO, had its weight among the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Mr. Hawatmeh said that his organisation did not oppose the peace process, but opposed the American conditions placed on the Palestinians to participate in the form that it did in Madrid. "Jerusalem representatives and Palestinians in the diaspora must be included in the negotiations if there is to be negotiations on their national rights within international legitimacy," Mr. Hawatmeh stressed.

"Sixty per cent of the Palestinian people in the diaspora and the Palestinians from Jerusalem cannot be ignored and they have the right to be represented at the negotiating table," he added.

"We must insist on a united delegation that would include all the Palestinian people everywhere, and if there is no positive response from Israel and the U.S., we should suspend the negotiations until this problem is solved through Arab, European and international help," Mr. Hawatmeh said, adding that the terms of reference should be the Security Council resolutions that recognise the Palestinians as a people who had rights to represent themselves through their chosen legitimate representative, the PLO.

Mr. Hawatmeh accused PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and his "conservative" supporters of deviating from the decisions of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) and the Palestine Central Council (PCC) that all Palestinians must be represented at the peace conference. He said this "violation" had deepened the split among the PLO and the Palestinian people.

"We lost what we could have gained from the outset of (U.S. Secretary of State James) Baker's shuttles to the region, because he (Mr. Baker) repeatedly stated that there would be no peace conference without the Palestinians," said Mr. Hawatmeh.

He added that it was not too late "to put the train on the right track because if we ride a train, coach that travels according to

the mood of the American driver, we should not be hostage to his mood because it could crash. We should participate in the movement of this train by putting it on the right track."

Using the metaphor of the train, Mr. Hawatmeh said that the Palestinian leadership had decided to participate according to the American conditions because they feared missing the train "even if it meant riding in the third class coach." He described this policy as "adventurous that could lead to destructive results."

"There is no need to fear missing the train after if passed its 'ninth station' in Madrid because no one will ask them to get off, and neither will we," Mr. Hawatmeh said. "But we call on them to return to our legitimate decisions (of the PNC and PCC) by putting the process on the right track in the next train stations. Only then will we be ready to be part of the negotiating team in this process."

The Palestinian leader considered Mr. Baker's eight peace shuttles to the region as eight stations and Madrid was the ninth.

Mr. Hawatmeh also said that combined efforts between the Jordanian and Palestinian negotiators should insist on linking the issue of Israeli settlements to suspending the negotiations until the Jewish state actually stops them. Mr. Hawatmeh referred to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's public statements that the settlements would continue and that he did not intend to "give up one inch" of the territories.

"The settlements also pose a demographic and security threat to Jordan, where the East Bank would find itself forced with an influx from the West Bank, especially that there still exists a large Israeli school of thought that believes Jordan is Palestine," noted Mr. Hawatmeh.

He added that negotiating the status of Palestinian refugees in the multilateral talks rather than in the bilateral talks between the Israelis and Palestinians also posed a threat.

Mr. Hawatmeh said that to turn the issue of Palestinian refugees into a regional issue and not a Palestinian problem, with support of international resolutions, could mean absorbing Palestinians into the countries where they reside rather than to practise their right of return.

The Palestinian leader also called for Palestinian insistence on changing the agenda in the next round of bilateral negotiations of discussion on self-rule for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip "through guarantees of linkage to stopping settlements and the right to self-determination."

"Only by reforming the delegation to include all Palestinians can we propose an agenda according to Security Council resolutions dealing with the land for peace formula, dismantling and stopping the settlements, self-determination and the right of refugees to return to their home," Mr. Hawatmeh stressed, insisting that the representation was linked to the substance that would be negotiated with the Israelis.

He said that holding an Arab summit that includes all members of the Arab League was now necessary and could help in reaching what he described as a common platform to "protect Palestinian, Jordanian and Arab interests."

JANDA to stay out of cabinet

(Continued from page 1)

deputies met and decided eight against one not to participate in Mr. Masri's government. JANDA sources said that the Jordan Communist Party's representative, Deputy Issa Mdanat, was the only one in favour of JANDA's participation in the cabinet.

On Monday night JANDA concluded that it was the executive committee of the coalition should draw up policies rather than the deputies on their own.

Mr. Masri was expected to reshuffle his cabinet or resign at any time now as his attempts to secure a broad coalition have reached a deadlock.

JANDA officials explained the group does not oppose Mr. Masri himself but are disappointed in the cabinet's failure to completely repeal martial law and its acceptance of International Monetary Fund (IMF) austerity measures.

Some trends in JANDA either oppose the peace talks with Israel or the basis upon which the Arab governments had taken part in the Madrid peace conference two weeks ago.

On Sunday Mr. Masri met with JANDA deputies who presented him with specific demands involving the immediate repeal of martial law, an end to any "excesses" by the security service, cancelling the IMF-inspired austerity measures and allowing access to the media by opposition groups.

Mr. Masri, according to JANDA officials, "was very positive." The prime minister reiterated commitment to all steps that will consolidate democracy and implied that JANDA can have a wider representation in his cabinet, they said.

Mr. Masri, according to the same sources, insisted to keep the ministers named by JANDA last June.

"We know that he is sincere. But the problem is that the cabinet does not seem to have enough authority or control," said one JANDA member.

The major organised groups in JANDA fear that if they take part in "a powerless cabinet," they will lose grassroots support, especially if living conditions drop as a result of recent austerity measures.

Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

The Palestinians' vision of the interim period contrasts with Israeli blueprints more than a decade old.

During the failed Israeli-Egyptian Palestinian autonomy talks that followed the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty — based on the Camp David accords — Israel proposed Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip take charge of their daily lives, leaving overall control to the Israeli army.

"We stick to the Camp David agreements," an Israeli foreign ministry spokesman said. He said that plan did not envisage Palestinian residents controlling the land.

That does not mean, however, that JANDA groups will oppose any new cabinet, that Mr. Masri forms. "We might oppose certain policies but there is no intention to fight Mr. Masri," said a leader of one of the main groups of JANDA.

Leaders of JANDA have postponed a discussion of whether to vote in favour of reshuffled new cabinet when Parliament convenes on the first of December.

"It mainly depends on the programme he offers. Our decision not to take part does not mean withholding confidence," said one JANDA official.

JANDA sources said that the group might support a reshuffled cabinet if only to ensure that Mr. Masri is not replaced by another prime minister "who is not as committed to democracy."

Judging from contacts with JANDA officials, domestic policies appear to play a more crucial role in determining the alliance's position over the debate on the Arab-Israeli talks.

JANDA is divided on the peace talks, but it is united against government austerity measures and what it views as revived increasing intervention by the security apparatus in curbing political activities and freedom of expression.

Although three of its deputies signed the petition endorsed by 49 parliamentarians last month calling for the resignation of Mr. Masri, JANDA as a group did not endorse the move.

According to analysts, JANDA, in fact opposed the petition for three reasons: — Concern that "conservative elements" will take over the cabinet — thus presenting

potential curbs on political freedoms.

— The Palestine National Council (PNC), which was held in Algiers last September, authorised Palestinian involvement in the peace process. JANDA was expected to pull at its ministers if the PNC had blocked Palestinian participation. "It would have been very risky to support Jordan's participation in the conference without the Palestinians," one source said.

— JANDA's decision not to enter an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood.

In addition to these reasons, analysts believe that support for Mr. Masri himself was and remains an important factor that influences if not necessarily determines JANDA's attitude.

But a combination of differences within the Palestinian ranks over the Madrid conference — that influenced the debate and the positions of some political groups here — the government austerity measures and what is viewed as curbs on political freedoms have triggered dissatisfaction among the main groups that constitute JANDA.

The confiscation of the Muslim Brotherhood's weekly Al Rabat, the censorship of the leftist Al Ahal weekly and the disruption of an anti-peace conference Islamist rally at the Professional Associations Complex are cited by many as indications of "regression" on political freedoms.

But critics of JANDA, including some leftists, argue that the alliance bears a great responsibility in failing to protect democratic freedoms by not coming out with a clearly defined political programme.

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Financial Markets

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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	NEW YORK CLOSE Date 11/11/91	TOKYO CLOSE Date 12/11/91
Sterling Pound	1.7690	1.7718
Deutsche Mark	1.6385	1.6384
Swiss Franc	1.4470	1.4498
French Franc	5.6040	5.5913
Japanese Yen	130.09	129.95
European Currency Unit	1.2413	1.2491

* JSD Per STG
** European Opening @ 8:00 a.m. GMT

Barocurrency Interest Rates

Date: 12/11/91

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	4.81	4.93	4.93	5.06
Sterling Pound	10.25	10.06	10.00	10.12
Deutsche Mark	8.93	9.25	9.25	9.25
Swiss Franc	7.50	7.81	7.81	7.81
French Franc	9.16	9.16	9.16	9.12
Japanese Yen	6.25	6.12	5.93	5.65
European Currency Unit	9.43	9.68	9.75	9.75

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Prevalent Metals

Date: 12/11/91

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	355.35	6.80	Silver	4.03	.088

* 21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 12/11/91

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6830	0.6850
Sterling Pound	1.2093	1.2153
Deutsche Mark	0.4165	0.4186
Swiss Franc	0.4710	0.4734
French Franc	0.1219	0.1225
Japanese Yen	0.5254	0.5280
Dutch Guilder	0.3697	0.3715
Swedish Krona	0.1141	0.1147
Italian Lira	0.0554	0.0557
Belgian Franc	0.02021	0.02031

* Per 100

Other Currencies

Date: 12/11/91

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7820	1.7910
Lebanese Lira	0.0773	0.0785
Saudi Riyal	0.1818	0.1824
Kuwaiti Dinar	-	-
Qatari Riyal	0.1850	0.1860
Egyptian Pound	0.2060	0.2150
Omani Riyal	1.7480	1.7570
UAE Dirham	0.1850	0.1860
Greek Drachma	0.3672	0.3722
Cypriot Pound	1.4750	1.4933

* Per 100

CAS Indices for Amman Financial Market

Date: 12/11/91

Index	10/11/91	Close	11/11/91	Close
All-Share	124.30		124.50	
Banking Sector	104.24		105.24	
Insurance Sector	125.81		125.91	
Industry Sector	153.69		153.60	
Services Sector	132.96		134.14	

* December 31, 1990 = 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One Sterling	1.7745/55	U.S. dollars	
One U.S. dollar	1.1310/15	Canadian dollar	
	1.6335/45	Deutsche mark	
	1.8415/25	Dutch guilder	
	1.4460/65	Swiss franc	
	33.66/70	Belgian franc	
	5.5750/5800	French franc	
	1230/1231	Italian lire	
	129.55/65	Japanese yen	
	5.9710/60	Swedish crown	
	6.4080/4130	Norwegian crown	
	6.3410/60	Danish crown	
One ounce of gold	355.00/50	U.S. dollars	

Germans agree on coal production cuts



Juergen Moellemann

BONN (R) — German Economics Minister Juergen Moellemann and the country's energy industry Monday agreed to slash production of heavily subsidised hard coal by 20 million tonnes to 50 million by the year 2000.

The cuts will cost about 30,000 jobs out of the industry's current 130,000, the country's mining union estimated.

After five hours of talks with coal and electricity leaders and the mining union, Mr. Moellemann told a news conference: "we reached a consensus... which is a reasonable compromise."

After the talks, some 100 miners broke off a sit-in in a cathedral in the Western city of Aachen which they occupied Sunday to protest against the proposed coal production cuts.

Bonn sought the production and subsidy cuts to save money while it pays the huge costs of rebuilding a shattered economy in former East Germany, which merged with the west last year.

Germany's hard coal, selling at three times the level of world market prices, depends heavily on subsidies to guarantee it a share of the domestic market.

Mr. Moellemann said the agreement would reduce annual subsidies for hard coal from governments as well as electricity consumers by four billion marks (\$2.43 billion) from about 14 billion marks (\$8.50 billion).

"For us, the mining industry, it is a very difficult compromise," said Heinz Horn, management board chairman of Germany's largest coal producer, Ruhrkohle A.G. "But we will find a way to a new job for everybody."

A programme for production cuts foresees government financial support for restructuring the industry.

Hundreds of miners took to the street almost daily in the past month in North-Rhine Westphalia and Saar states, home of the country's hard coal industry.

The amount of domestic hard coal the energy industry must use for electricity generation every year will be cut to 35 million tonnes from a current 40.9 million by the year 2000.

Steel industry use of hard coal for crude steel production will be cut to 15 million tonnes from 18 million. The remaining production, for home heating, is not subsidised.

The agreement left open how to finance hard coal production for the electricity industry after 1995, when a contract requiring it to buy a fixed amount of domestic coal expires.

While the steel industry is directly subsidised by the federal and regional governments, the electricity industry passes on the higher costs for domestic coal to consumers.

The electricity industry has said it will use costly German hard coal after 1995 only if it is offered at world market prices.

"The current various financing mechanisms will look different after 1996 but... it is still to be discussed," Mr. Moellemann said.

NCR merger brings big loss for ATT

NEW YORK (R) — American Telephone and Telegraph Co. (ATT) has said it lost \$1.8 billion in the third quarter, reflecting the cost of merging with computer maker NCR Corp.

But the world's biggest telephone company added that it would have outperformed its results for the same quarter a year ago if it had not been for the merger.

Revenues were \$11.04 billion, compared with \$10.91 billion in the third quarter of 1990.

The loss was equal to \$1.40 a share and compared with a profit of \$803 million, or 62 cents a share, a year ago.

In a report that for the first time combined results for both

ATT and NCR, whose merger was completed on Sept. 19, the company said it took charges of \$4.2 billion against earnings.

ATT had warned that it would take record charges to cover the cost of merging its computer operations with NCR and for other restructuring.

Without the charges, ATT said, its third-quarter results would have outperformed those of a year earlier "because of continuing growth in long distance and financial services."

For the first nine months of the year, ATT said it lost \$113 million, or nine cents a share, compared with a profit of \$2.3 million, \$1.79 a share, a year earlier.

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

TOKYO — Stocks closed sharply higher on a technical rebound powered by heavy arbitrage buying and strong bond futures but lack of fresh factors kept trade thin. The Nikkei closed up 434.74 or 1.79 per cent at 24,667.73.

FRANKFURT — Shares jumped nearly 18 points in early trading but patchy buying saw a retreat from the day's highs. The Dax index finished 12.20 points up at 1,621.22.

ZURICH — Easier interest rates, a firmer Frankfurt Bourse and a higher Wall Street opening bolstered the market. The All-Share SPI index closed 6.9 points higher at 1,108.4.

PARIS — Anxieties about the strength of the economy kept fund managers out of the market. The CAC-40 index ended with the day with a gain of 0.89 points to close at 1,858.44.

LONDON — A rally helped by stronger than expected British Airways earnings ran out of steam when the market neared the top of a two-month trading range. The FTSE 100 index closed 20.6 points higher at 2,575.5.

NEW YORK — Blue Chips were steady in active late morning trade with strong bond prices supporting the market. The Dow was up four points at 3,046 at 1600 GMT.

Japan, other finance centres hasten historic lending drop

BASEL, Switzerland (AP) — Western banks posted a record slowdown in business in the second quarter of this year, a survey of official statistics said Monday.

Japanese banks, which had paced the industry's expansion in the late 1980s, continued to lead the way in beating a retreat, the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) said.

Total international claims by Western banks fell an unprecedented \$164 billion in April through June, making for a \$219 billion contraction in the first six months of 1991, the latest BIS quarterly report said.

It was the first time this broad

measure of world banking showed a decline in two consecutive quarters, BIS said.

A slump in lending between banks that report to BIS caused most of the slump.

Yet even with those transactions factored out, April-June brought a historic first drop in the volume of net outstanding credits, BIS reported. The contraction was \$5 billion, after an expansion of \$60 billion in the first quarter of 1991.

The second-quarter slump in international banking was widespread, affecting most financial centres and banks in all major nations, the survey said.

But as in the first quarter, Japanese banks reported the largest decline as increasingly conservative policies took hold.

BIS analysts linked the retreat partly to tighter rules for Japanese banks' capital base and said it "appears to reflect a basic change in their strategies, away from balance-sheet growth towards asset quality."

Japan's banks accounted for some 55 per cent of the \$125.7 billion drop in cross-border inter-bank transactions, BIS said.

Following the Gulf war, oil-exporting Middle East countries drew down their Western accounts by \$5.4 billion in the second quarter,

the survey said. BIS analysts linked this to post-war reconstruction needs and weak oil prices.

Western banks further reduced their exposure in eastern Europe, cutting claims by \$3.1 billion.

In contrast to the banking chill, international securities markets remained buoyant in the second quarter, BIS said. New bond issues totalling \$82 billion were announced, down only slightly from \$91 billion in the first quarter.

BIS, a forum for Western central bankers, surveys banking in 17 industrial nations and several major offshore centres.

Soviet foreign debt reaches \$81b

MOSCOW (AP) — The Soviet Union's foreign debt has topped \$81 billion, far higher than previously reported, and most of it was contracted under Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership, a news agency said Monday.

The independent Interfax news agency said the figure was revealed Monday during a closed-door meeting of the committee formed after the failed August coup to run the country.

The West is increasingly concerned that the Soviet Union will not be able to meet its debt payments, and Western investors are holding back because of fears of Soviet insolvency.

The TASS news agency quoted Ivan Silayev, the head of the committee, as saying after the meeting that the country's hard currency situation was "very grave."

Mr. Silayev said the committee was not satisfied with the information it had on the debt and instructed experts to prepare a fuller report before its next meeting Nov. 13, TASS reported.

The chairman of Deutsche Bank, Germany's largest bank, said Monday in Frankfurt that he was worried the Soviet Union may soon be unable to meet its foreign debt.

Last week, the Soviet foreign trade bank acknowledged that the country faced a shortfall of \$1.1 billion in hard currency earnings this month, but pledged to meet its debt obligations. State bank chairman Viktor Geraschenko told Monday's meeting that the Soviet Union's hard currency situation remained difficult.

Interfax said the Soviet debt stood at 47.2 billion so-called convertible roubles, which at the official exchange rate is more than \$81 billion.

That figure does not include up to 18 billion convertible roubles, or \$31 billion, that is owed to former East Bloc countries.

Interfax said that most of the Soviet Union's foreign debt was contracted in the last six years — the period since Mr. Gorbachev assumed power in 1985.

Mr. Gorbachev's predecessors were conservative borrowers and promptly paid their debts. Until very recently the Soviet Union has been considered a good credit risk.

Mr. Silayev said he did not exclude the possibility of selling part of the Soviet debt on the world market as one of the ways to solve the hard currency problem, TASS said.

The consequences of the Soviet Union's hard currency crunch can be felt throughout the economy and society. Because of the shortfall, factories cannot purchase needed Western parts for production. Some medicines and syringes that traditionally were purchased abroad can no longer be bought.

The Interfax report said that the Soviet Union was owed about 94 billion roubles by other countries, about half from its former socialist allies in eastern Europe and the other half from the developing world. The report said that it was impossible to determine how much this figure represented in dollars.

However, the Soviet foreign trade bank has said it believes that it could possibly collect half of that sum at best. Among the nations that owe money to the Soviet Union are Cuba, Angola, Mozambique, and Afghanistan — all of which have serious economic problems of their own.

The Soviet foreign debt has previously been estimated at \$65 billion to \$68 billion.

Romania, Bulgaria get EC loans but warn of instability

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Community (EC) approved emergency loans for Romania and Bulgaria Monday but both countries warned their reforms could be imperilled without more Western support.

EC finance ministers agreed to provide second tranches of balance of payments loans to Bulgaria and Romania, despite the failure of other wealthy countries to provide half of the promised \$1.8 billion.

But Romanian Foreign Minister Adrian Nastase told the Group of 24 (G-24) rich industrialised states, meeting separately in Brussels, that his country needed \$3 billion just to meet food and energy needs for the next six months.

The G-24 suspended its aid to Yugoslavia, which was not invited to Monday's talks. In a final statement, it expressed concern at continuing bloodshed and said it might later consider calling a special meeting to discuss the conflict there.

German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher had urged such a meeting be called urgently and be open to all parties to the conflict which cooperated in trying to end the fighting.

The group agreed to consider without delay Romania's food aid requests, to increase food and humanitarian aid for Albania and to look at ways to meet Bulgaria's

electricity shortfall after part of a nuclear power station closed for safety reasons.

The industrialised countries agreed to call a G-24 working level meeting before the end of the year to discuss the needs of the three Baltic countries which have just been admitted to the G-24 process of aid for ex-communist states.

Mr. Nastase said Romanians were becoming disillusioned with reforms due to the absence of greater international backing and the West's insistence on tough conditions for granting aid.

"This in turn creates the environment for social unrest and turmoil, which is profitable only to right and left extremists," he said.

Bulgarian Foreign Minister Stoyan Ganev said the reform process in his country might be undermined if the international community did not give strong support.

The EC decision to push ahead with loans to Bulgaria and Romania did not mean it no longer wanted other countries, especially the United States, to share more of the burden, said Henning Christophersen, EC commissioner for economic affairs.

"We hope that, by showing more flexibility, we'll encourage the United States" to provide more, he said.

Washington, citing budget con-

straints, has agreed to provide only \$10 million of the \$800 million in balance of payments support that Bulgaria needs this year.

It has not contributed so far to the \$1 billion for Romania because of doubts about Bucharest's political reforms.

Diplomatic sources said U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger told G-24 colleagues that the Bush administration was now willing to contribute \$25 million over two years to Romania in balance of payments grants, but that congressional support was uncertain.

Promises of East European assistance coordinated by G-24 since the beginning of 1990 totalled \$32 billion. But European Commission calculations have shown that little more than one-fifth of it has been paid out.

The G-24 statement said Albania, Romania and Bulgaria were likely to need exceptional balance of payments aid next year, while the possible needs of the Baltic countries would be decided after they joined the International Monetary Fund.

External Relations Commissioner Frans Andriessen said the EC was sticking to the principle that its 12 members should meet no more than half the cost of G-24 aid, but the proportion could end up higher if other states did not meet commitments.

Government tells Bangladeshis to get rid of smuggled stock

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh, preparing for a major crackdown on smuggling, has ordered traders to get rid of their stocks of contraband by the end of the month or face arrest.

"The government will launch a tough anti-smuggling drive from Dec. 1 to try to protect local industries and create employment," said a government statement.

All shops and warehouses must clear stocks of smuggled goods by Nov. 31 or their owners will be arrested, it added.

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman has said smuggling is threatening to ruin the economy.

Police say smugglers have been using Bangladesh, which has an annual per capita income of \$170 and is one of the world's poorest countries, as a transit route, especially for gold and drugs.

Customs agents at Dhaka airport have seized 629 kilograms of gold worth about \$9 million in the past six years.

A third of that was confiscated in the past year alone, they told the Inquilab newspaper recently.

What hampers Bangladesh most is the inflow of consumer goods from old garments to electronic equipment.

"The entire country has been a fabulous market for contraband goods and law enforcing agents too have a hand in it," a senior government official said.

Some officials, however, say they doubt the anti-smuggling drive will be effective.

"How can you give smugglers a deadline to conceal or sell their stuff if you really want to make the crackdown effective?" one said. "I suspect it's going to be an eye-wash."

Meanwhile, Bangladesh expects to overcome any short-term food crisis thanks to a good rice harvest predicted for this winter, agriculture ministry officials said Tuesday.

Last year Bangladesh, a country of 110 million people, harvested a record 18.5 million tonnes of grain.

Officials said the April cyclone that killed more than 136,000 people on the coast and islands in the Bay of Bengal and floods sweeping the north in September damaged about 900,000 tonnes of

the aman paddy," one official said. The winter aman paddy was not affected by the disasters and would yield about nine million tonnes, nearly half the total annual harvest, the agriculture ministry official said.

Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest countries, would still need to import nearly two million tonnes of grain to make up the shortfall, officials said.

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